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THE FALL OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE

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THE FALL OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE

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PREFACE

THIS book is not a regular history of the period over which it extends, but the substance of a course of lectures intended to trace the operation of the causes which, in the course of a century, reduced the mighty and far-famed Empire of the Great Mogul to a political shadow. Accordingly, events of minor importance, or not materially affecting the main issue, are not noticed. And others which are cognate to, and virtually repetitions of, what has been already related, are either omitted, or glanced at very summarily. And throughout an attempt has been made not to tax the memory with too many bald facts, but to bring out the salient features of the story, so as to enlist the imagination by suggesting a series of historical pictures.

A common impression is, that, as is so often the case in the East, the decline and fall of the Mogul Empire were due to the degeneracy of its Sovereigns. But it is the object of this book to show that it was irretrievably ruined in the reign of Aurungzib, a monarch of great ability, energy, and determination, but lacking in political insight, and a bigoted Mussulman.

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He struck the first mortal blow by reversing Akbar's wise and generous policy of ignoring distinctions of *race* and religion, and reimposing the *jizya*, or poll-tax, on his Hindoo subjects; whereby he estranged them, and turned the noblest and most warlike of them—the Rajputs, hitherto the staunchest supporters of the throne—into deadly and persistent enemies.

And Sivaji and his followers not only vindicated their independence, but struck a second mortal blow at the integrity of the Empire.

They destroyed its military reputation. They exhausted its accumulated treasure. They spread disorder and devastation over the Dekkan and beyond it. They loosened the ties of allegiance, and led multitudes of the doubly oppressed people to join them. They asserted a claim, by way of blackmail, to a quarter of the Imperial revenue, and exacted it by planting their own chief officers, collectors, and troops in the Imperial Provinces, and levying this tribute at the point of the lance, and thus establishing an *imperium in imperio*. Thus the Empire, though not dissolved, was hopelessly debilitated. How desperate was this situation may be inferred from the fact that Aurungzib's son and successor, Bahadur Shah, in vain sought to arrest the further progress of the Mahrattas by sanctioning this masterful pretension to divided sovereignty in the Dekkan Provinces.

The effective authority of the central govern-

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ment was thenceforth in abeyance. And, as usual in the East, the provincial rulers, without repudiating the technical supremacy of the Emperor, became independent, and the Mahrattas more aggressive and dominant in Hindostan as well as in the Dekkan.

Lastly, Nadir Shah, after inflicting the extremity of humiliation on the Emperor and his capital, annexed the Imperial territory west of the Indus. The dissolution of the Empire was complete. But the lack-land Sovereign retained his imposing title and pretensions, which still impressed the native mind, and were turned to practical account by Clive in the grant to the East India Company of the perpetual *Dewani* of the Bengal Provinces.

The following narrative is derived almost entirely from contemporary authorities.

For the nefarious process by which Aurungzib cleared his way to the throne I have followed Manucci, a Venetian in Dara's service, whose *Storia do Mogor* has been lately translated and edited by Mr. William Irvine.

The account of the reigns of Aurungzib and his successors, to the final settlement of Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Dekkan, has been taken from the standard history of Khafi Khan, translated by Professor Dowson, and inserted in the 7th volume of *The History of India from its own Historians*. This author served under Aurungzib in the Dekkan.

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For the later history I am most indebted to Grant Duff's *History of the Mahrattas*.

But the sketch of Aliverdi Khan's career is taken from the *Seir Mutaquerin*, a contemporary work, translated by a Frenchman under the auspices of Warren Hastings. This work has also supplied information on matters outside Bengal.

The Paniput Campaign has been fully and lucidly described by Cāsi Pundit, a Mahratta in the service of the Nawab of Oude, who was much concerned in the negotiations preceding the battle, and was an eye-witness of it. The narrative was translated and published anonymously in the third volume of the *Asiatic Researches*.

In spelling Indian names I have endeavoured to steer an even course between uncouth archaisms and the latest fashion of unfamiliar and accentuated rendering, which perplexes and troubles the general reader. But I have not felt at liberty to alter the spelling in passages which I have quoted.

For the Index I am indebted to my daughter, Mrs. F. Boas, who kindly offered to compile it.

S. J. O.

OXFORD, *January* 1912.

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CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF CHIEF EVENTS

1657.—Shah Jehan falls seriously ill.
Shuja defeated by Solaiman Shukoh.
1658.—Dara defeated by Aurungzib and Morad.
Shah Jehan deposed and imprisoned.
Morad arrested; and Aurungzib becomes Emperor.
Solaiman flies to Sirinagar.
1659.—Aurungzib defeats Shuja.
Aurungzib defeats and puts Dara to death.
Sivaji murders Afzal Khan.
1660.—Shuja retires to Arakan.
Solaiman betrayed to Aurungzib.
1661.—Morad murdered.
1662.—Sivaji surprises Shaista Khan at Poona.
1664.—Sivaji raids Surat, assumes title of Raja, and coins money.
1665.—Sivaji submits, and goes to Delhi.
1666.—Shah Jehan dies.
Sivaji returns to Rajgurh.
Is crowned as Raja with Mogul forms.
1677.—Aurungzib reimposes the *jizya*.
1679.—The Rajputs revolt.
Prince Akbar joins them.
1680.—Sivaji dies.
1681.—Prince Akbar joins Sambaji.
1682.—Sambaji raids near Burhampur.
1683.—Aurungzib undertakes the Dekkan war.
1686.—Aurungzib takes Bijapur.
1687.—Aurungzib takes Golconda.
1689.—Sambaji put to death.
1690.—Ram Raja becomes Regent.
1694.—Gingee besieged.
1698.—Gingee surrendered.
Santaji Ghorepuray murdered.
1699.—Aurungzib changes his plan of war.
1700.—Ram Raja dies.
1707.—Aurungzib dies.
Shao released, and established as Raja, at Satara.
1709.—Bahadur Shah marches against the Sikhs.
1712.—Bahadur Shah dies.
Farokhsir defeats Jahandar Shah.

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1713.—Husain Ali goes to the Dekkan.
1716.—Daud Khan defeated and killed.
1717.—Husain makes peace with Raja Shao.
1718.—Farokhsir deposed and put to death.
1720.—Nizam-ul-Mulk becomes strong in the Dekkan.
Defeats the Seiads' armies.
Husain assassinated.
Abdullah defeated and captured.
Baji Rao becomes Peishwa.
1722.—Nizam-ul-Mulk made Vizier.
1723.—Nizam-ul-Mulk resigns, and retires to the Dekkan.
1724.—Mubariz defeated and slain.
1729.—Nizam-ul-Mulk coerced by Baji Rao.
1731.—Baji Rao defeats and kills Trimbuk.
Nizam-ul-Mulk and Baji Rao make peace.
1732-6.—Baji Rao's success in Malwa, etc.
1737.—Baji Rao threatens Delhi.
Blockades, and extorts concessions from, Nizam-ul-Mulk.
1738.—Nadir Shah invades India.
1739.—His extortions and massacre at Delhi.
Aliverdi becomes Viceroy of the Bengal Provinces.
The Mahrattas take Bassein.
1740.—Baji Rao foiled by Nazir Jung.
Baji Rao dies.
1742.—Balaji extorts the cession of Malwa.
First Mahratta invasion under Bhaskir Pundit.
1743.—Aliverdi defeats and expels Rugoji from Bengal.
Second Mahratta invasion under Rugoji.
1744.—Third Mahratta invasion under Bhaskir.
Aliverdi murders him and his officers.
1745.—Mustapha defeated and slain.
Fourth Mahratta invasion by Rugoji.
1748.—Mohammad Shah and Nizam-ul-Mulk die.
Rebellion of Sirdar Khan and Shumsur Khan.
Fifth Mahratta invasion.
Ahmed Shah Abdali's first invasion of India.
1749.—Raja Shao dies.
1751.—Balaji entraps the Guikwar.
Salabat Jung marches on Poona.
Aliverdi makes peace with the Bonsla.
Ahmed Shah's second invasion.
1754.—Ghazi-u-din deposes and blinds the Emperor Ahmed Shah.
1756.—The Abdali's third invasion.
1758.—Rugonath Rao takes Delhi and Lahore.
1759.—The Abdali's fourth invasion.
1760.—The Bhow conquers the Nizam.
Marches to Hindostan, and takes Delhi.
1761.—The battle of Paniput.
The Peishwa, Balaji, dies.

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THE FALL OF THE MOGUL EMPIRE

I

THE MOGUL EMPIRE AT ITS ZENITH

In the middle of the seventeenth century, the Empire of the "Great Mogul" was highly renowned both in Asia and in Europe. It is notable that Bernier, who lived many years in India, and was very familiar with the Court of the Emperor, thinks it worth while to institute a comparison between the Mogul Empire and that of *le Grand Monarque* at the height of his power; though, of course, he concludes in favour of the latter. Nor was the reputation of the Asiatic Monarchy undeserved. Whatever its defects, it was, on the whole, a grandly conceived, well-adjusted, and beneficent structure of dominion.

The illustrious origin of its founder, Baber, who was descended from the two mightiest Asiatic conquerors, Ghenzis Khan and Timour, gave to the dynasty high prestige, which its

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matrimonial alliances with Rajput princesses tended to enhance among its Hindoo subjects. And the vigorous vitality of the royal house had been attested by the personal rule of five successive emperors in lineal descent. After its apparent extinction under Humayun, Akbar's genius and indefatigable warfare had restored, pacified, and extended the limits of Baber's acquisition. And Shah Jehan was now the undisputed sovereign of a vast territory, not indeed, as is often assumed, conterminous with India on the south, but, on the other hand, extending beyond it into the Afghan mountains.

That a Mussulman emperor should thus quietly command the allegiance of a great and warlike population, the far larger number of which was Hindoo, was remarkable, and an eloquent testimony to the merits of the régime. And this favourable impression was confirmed by a closer inspection of the Mogul Government, and its general results.

The habitual and ready submission of the Hindoos to a sovereign alien to themselves in race and religion was due to his lenient and sympathetic treatment of them. Instead of carrying out the harsher precepts of the Koran; maintaining an invidious distinction between the followers of the Prophet and the unbelievers, and narrowing the moral basis of his authority by excluding the latter from office on the ground of religious disqualification; the Great Mogul

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winked at and condoned the misbelief of the bulk of his subjects, and their strange practices; showed special favour to their more eminent men; admitted them freely to high posts, both civil and military, and thus, figuring in the capacity of the Father of all his people, made it their interest and their pride to serve and sustain a régime so liberal, comprehensive, and considerate.

Thus, while the Empire rooted itself more and more in the hearts of the natives, its material strength was proportionally increased. For, though its regular armies were constantly recruited by soldiers drawn from its Afghan territory, and by mercenaries from Upper Asia, who were Mahometans, as well as by men of the same faith, though inhabitants of India, the vast force which was at the disposal of the Emperor, according to the *Ayeen Akbery*, may be described rather as a quasi-national army, if not as a militia, which must have been very largely composed of Hindoos.

The naval weakness of the Empire was as notable as its military strength. Practically, it never had a fleet of its own, though the Abyssinian "Seedys" were patronised and subsidised for its occasional objects. And this is the more remarkable, as the annual pilgrimage by sea to Mecca required protection, and was apt to be seriously interrupted by enemies or marauders.

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Sivaji, as we shall see, took advantage of this circumstance.

Though the Government was despotic, and particular acts of great severity are recorded, its general tone was mild and humane. Taxation was light; and its most productive source, the land revenue, was moderately assessed, and equitably adjusted. Foreign commerce was protected and favoured; and the English East India Company throve, and multiplied its factories, under the shadow of the Imperial authority. The judicial system, though what we should consider crude and capricious, as well as too often corruptly exercised, was not liable like our own to the tedious delays which have been its reproach, and which have so much tended to obstruct, and even defeat, the course of justice. And the right of appealing to the Emperor, from inferior tribunals, though too generally a futile privilege, was sometimes really remedial, and probably was, to a certain extent, a standing check on judicial iniquity. Much the same may be said as to the Provincial Governors. Though their delegated authority was, like their master's, arbitrary, its exercise was open to the criticism and unfavourable reports to Court of other officials, and of unofficial but influential *Jaghiredars*; as well as to the periodical inquisitions of Imperial Commissioners, like Charlemagne's *Missi Dominici*; on whose adverse judgment the

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Governor was liable to removal and punishment.

The comparative internal tranquillity of the Empire in later years had favoured the pursuits of peace, augmented the Imperial revenue, and culminated in what may be called the quasi-Augustan Age of the dynasty; when the pomp and magnificence of the Court were most elaborately organised and profusely displayed; literature and philosophy were esteemed, and cultivated in high quarters; and the fine arts flourished to an extent that may be fairly appreciated by the noble and graceful monuments that, as in the case of the Taj Mahal, still appeal so forcibly to the æsthetic sense even of Europeans at the present day.

Paradoxical as it may sound, it is not the less true, that the greatness and prosperity of the Empire were due to the Gallic disposition of its sovereigns. Though professed votaries of Islam, they were none of them animated by its exclusive and fierce spirit; and their instincts as statesmen constrained them to ignore differences which they could not hope to remove; and to strengthen their power by conciliation, rather than undermine and fritter it away in a Quixotic tilt against the strongholds of Hindoo superstition. Baber himself was not only too sagacious and experienced, but too generous a man to be a religious persecutor. And his grandson Akbar not only inherited his large-

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hearted disposition, but was too independent a religious thinker to feel bound to act on the precepts of the Koran in their political application. Thus his latitudinarian views found expression in his liberal and comprehensive policy. Though, like our own Government, he set his face against some of the worst social evils of Hindooism, forbidding *suttee*, and sanctioning the remarriage of widows, he was more than tolerant to his Hindoo subjects—for he not only, by abolishing the *jizya*, or poll-tax on infidels, removed a most invidious distinction between his co-religionists and the majority of his people, but he gave the strongest practical proof of his resolution to ignore distinctions of race and religion by employing both classes impartially in his service, and by cementing domestic relations between his family and the most typical and venerable representatives of Hindoo nationality, the Rajput Principalities. And he was personally attached, and gave his fullest confidence, to members of this noble race. They held high commands in his armies, were Governors of important provinces, and sat in his Council. Their gallant troops distinguished themselves in his wars; and from them were selected a corps of what may be called Guards, who were characteristically stationed outside the palace.

His example was followed by his descendants; and the intermarriage of the Mogul princes with the Rajput princesses tended much to promote

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sympathy between the races, to abate religious prejudice on both sides, and in the end to half-Hindooise the dynasty, and thereby to strengthen its hold over the Hindoo community generally. For it thus lost much of the aspect of an alien and invidious Power, established by conquest, and was more generally regarded as (so to speak) a naturalised, normal, and congenial Paramount Authority, rightfully entitled, by its beneficent sway, to the allegiance and zealous support of its native subjects.

This result was of course due not simply to the introduction of Hindoo blood into the royal family, but to the persistence in Akbar's line of conduct. Jehangir and Shah Jehan, without pledging themselves to his theological eclecticism, steadily adhered to his liberal and comprehensive policy, which thus came to be recognised as the fixed and inevitable order of things; though there was, of course, a back-water of rigidly orthodox and fanatical Mahometan sentiment, very hostile to the system in favour at Court. But the authority of the Emperor counteracted, without entirely suppressing, its indignant protest. On lower grounds also than religious principle attempts seem to have been made to reintroduce oppressive and degrading inflictions on the Hindoos. One audacious speculator, as the Emperor Jehangir tells the story in his Memoirs, ventured to suggest that he should "spoil the Egyptians" by

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reinstituting the *jizya*, and allowing the proposer to hold the farm of it. But Jehangir, proud of his great father's memory, and determined to walk in his steps, and not blind to the self-interested motive of the proposer, was not content simply to repudiate the suggestion, and rebuke the rash and selfish proposer of it, but punished him after a fashion characteristically Oriental.

More mindful of Akbar's policy than of Mahomet's precepts, he closed with the proposition, consented to farm out the impost to the projector, exacted the money in advance, and then cut off the unlucky fellow's head for having had the temerity to seek his own profit at the expense of his sovereign's reputation, the welfare of the community, and the good-ordering of the State.

This strange incident at least shows how thoroughly Akbar had indoctrinated his son in the principles of religious freedom and social equality, though Jehangir's peculiar dealing with the impugner of them certainly leaves something to be desired in the matter of equity and humanity.

Again, the process of assimilation which had approximated the Imperial family to the Hindoo race had long been in operation in various degrees, and from more than one cause, among the Indian-born Mussulmans. As in Ireland, immigrants after a time were proverb-

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ially said to become *Hibernis Hiberniores*, so local influences and associations, including intermarriage, and more irregular connexions, contributed to soften the asperities of religious antagonism, and to create common interests and a common jealousy of foreigners of a different type, though of their own faith. This feeling was liable to be much intensified by the circumstance that there was a constant stream of Mahometan adventurers from the North, seeking their fortunes in the Imperial service; and that they were apt to be more highly esteemed, and more liberally paid, than their Indian co-religionists. Moreover, it must be remembered that the latter were often the descendants of converted Hindoos; and, as in the case of the Moriscos of Spain, heredity might assert itself in the shape of stronger sympathy with their old stock than with their new and superficial faith. And this was the more probable from the remoteness and comparative isolation of India from the capital of the Mussulman world, and the influence of the Sultan of Roum.

Thus not only were the Emperor's native Mahometan subjects only a fraction of the population; but it was very doubtful how far he could count on their sympathy and co-operation in an attempt to reverse Akbar's policy, and depress and persecute the Hindoo majority.

The arduousness of such an enterprise will be more evident if we consider the characteristics

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of the several peoples that were destined to become the subjects of this rash experiment. Foremost and most obviously formidable were the inhabitants of Rajputana. Their alleged origin, on which they prided themselves, their authentic history, their institutions and established character, and the prominent and effective part which they had hitherto played in the Imperial service, all betokened the serious consequences that might be anticipated from their estrangement and hostility.

They claimed descent from the original warrior caste; and their stereotyped characteristics gave much plausibility to the pretension. Their ancestors had undoubtedly fought obstinately and valiantly against the early Mahometan invaders, and had eventually preserved their independence by retiring into the remote and sequestered region which they had since occupied, and where they retained their military character in all its vigour, sustained by institutions which curiously combined the tribal peculiarities of the Scotch Highlanders, the feudal relations of the more settled communities of mediæval Europe, and a chivalrous spirit, akin to that which was so closely associated with feudalism in the West. The personal devotion of the Highland clan to the patriarchal Chief had a counterpart in the passionate fidelity of the Rajput tribe to its Prince. Under him, as in feudal Europe, the *thakoors*, or nobles, held

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their lands by military tenure, and were bound to support their Prince in his wars. And while, as in feudal Europe, their independent spirit, their pride, and their readiness to take offence, made their relations with him by no means uniformly harmonious, their proficiency in war was more habitually maintained by the jealousies, quarrels, and consequent contests of the rival tribes. And these were the more frequent and obstinate, because the Rajput was, so to speak, a true sportsman in the great game of war. To distinguish himself in battle was his point of honour; he fought for fame, not like the lower races for plunder; and his great delight, in his hours of relaxation, was to listen to the spirit-stirring strains of his *bhats*—or minstrel bards, commemorative of the martial achievements of his Princes and their followers. But as Akbar's policy was developed, the Rajputs found ample occupation for their favourite pursuit in the Imperial armies; in which, however, they still retained their separate organisation, and thus preserved their peculiar character and corporate spirit.

Akbar's remembrance of his grandfather's experience of Rajput hostility must have strongly impressed on him the importance of conciliating this remarkable people, and securing their alliance rather than their subjection. For, after his easy victory over Sultan Ibrahim, Baber had been confronted by a great Rajput Con-

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federacy, headed by a typical hero, Rana Sanga; and though in the desperate battle which ensued the invader conquered at last by employing a Tartar manœuvre, he bears full testimony to the fighting power and gallantry of his opponents, whose undisciplined valour yielded only to his superior tactics. And such as he found them, they continued to be in the days of his successors.

It must be remembered also that, besides the Rajput communities established under their half-independent Princes in the country which bears their name, numbers of the same race were widely dispersed elsewhere, and abounded especially in their old home, Oude, and in Behar, whose descendants so largely constituted the Company's sepoy army in later times. Many Rajas and Poligars throughout the country claimed to be of Rajput descent; and their sympathies, and those of their followers, would naturally be enlisted on behalf of their real or alleged kinsmen and co-religionists.

And much to the point for our present purpose, Sivaji himself claimed Rajput descent on the mother's side.

On the whole, as the Empire had thriven so much by its connexion with this noble and powerful people, their estrangement would be a very serious blow to its strength and integrity, both directly and, from the example of so pre-eminent a people, indirectly.

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The Jats were a very different type. Their early history is obscure. But they were a comparatively more indigenous race, and may be classed among the *sudras* in caste. They had none of the chivalrous spirit of the Rajputs. But though a ruder and more ordinary people, they were hardy, daring, pertinacious, and warlike; and in later times they approved their military capacity by holding their capital Bhurtpore against Lake, and repulsing four assaults. They also had a pronounced taste for plunder, which if, as seems probable, the Gypsies are their kinsmen, might be safely assumed. But I mention it, because, as with the Mahrattas, if they were inclined to resent religious intolerance, this filibustering appetency would be an additional stimulus to resistance and lawlessness.

Again, though the Sikhs, originally Hindoos, and probably Jats, had repudiated caste, and their peculiar religious system had little in common with popular Hindooism, they were fanatically devoted to the Khalsa, or what I may call their own Church; and circumstances, which I need not now relate, transformed them from a body of mild and mystical religionists into stern and grim warriors, jealous for the honour, and sanguine of the extension, of their faith and polity; and burning with hatred of Islam and its rival pretensions and domineering principles. Any attempts to enforce these would

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inevitably encounter most resolute resistance from such a people.

That exclusively of any external assault, the Empire could have survived the debilitating and disintegrating consequences of reversing the policy which had developed, cemented, and consolidated it, is highly improbable.

The alienation of the Rajputs, even if it had not amounted to active hostility, would alone have availed to sap both its material and moral strength. It would have been further weakened by the indisposition of the native Mussulmans to identify themselves with, and support heartily, a régime which—in a land where custom is an all-powerful consideration—did such violence to their old associations and fixed habits, and, in many cases, to their latent sympathies; and which was too likely to produce internecine war with the majority of their compatriots.

Thus the Government would be compelled to place its chief reliance on the foreign and more bigoted Mahometans; while the inevitable failure of the revenue, from the disturbed state of the country, would make the payment of such extraneous mercenaries, in adequate force, the more difficult. Moreover, as I have already said, the marked preference for these strangers habitually shown by the Government tended to divide the Mussulman interest, by exciting jealousy and antipathy to them among the native Mahometans. And such feelings would now acquire a

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new and powerful stimulus. Hence, again, a new danger to the dynasty. It was by no means improbable, as I hope to show from what actually occurred later, that some distinguished and influential native Mussulman might make common cause with the Hindoo interest, and attempt to re-establish the old order. Thus the Seiads of Barha, long settled in India, had always been distinguished for military prowess. They were now a very numerous and powerful community, and, as appeared later, quite capable of engaging in an anti-Mogul and quasi-nationalist revolution, in concert with the Hindoos.

Thus, on the whole, had the critical experiment been made in a time of profound peace, and had not its inherent difficulties been aggravated by external danger, and heavy demands on the Imperial resources to meet the exigencies of foreign warfare, it could hardly have failed eventually to ruin the dynasty, and, unless the counter-revolution had succeeded, and the new ruler had possessed great governing qualities—the Empire also.

But the catastrophe came about in another way; though the experiment was made, and the first fatal breach in the integrity of the Imperial structure—the alienation of the Rajputs—rapidly ensued. But before this had occurred, Aurungzib, the rash innovator, had already engaged in another enterprise, which committed him, in a new field, to a contest with militant Hindooism

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of an exceptionally formidable and insidious character, which proved more than a match for his utmost and prolonged efforts to suppress it, and in the end a chief cause of the collapse which his proceedings in Hindostan had threatened to bring about.

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II

AURUNGZIB MAKES HIMSELF EMPEROR

When the Emperor, Shah Jehan, was attacked by a sudden and dangerous illness at Delhi, Dara Shukoh, his eldest son, was at the capital; Shah Shuja, his second son, was Governor of Bengal; Morad Buksh, the youngest, was Governor of Guzerat; and Alamgirh, styled later Aurungzib, the third son, was in the Dekkan engaged in the siege of Bijapur, the capital of one of the two surviving Afghan monarchies there. The Emperor's illness, and disappearance from public view, produced general consternation, and threatened serious disturbance at the capital and in the Provinces.

Shah Jehan himself fully appreciated the danger of the crisis. Disabled as he was, he seems to have feared that the *coup de grâce* might be given him by the partisans of one or other of his ambitious sons, rivals for the succession of their moribund parent. And it is notable that, in this extremity, he showed more confidence in the Rajputs than in his Mogul subjects. Manucci, who was in Dara's service, says: "He ordered all the gates of the fortress to be closed, leaving

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only two wickets open. Placing no reliance on the Mahometan commanders, he ordered Jeswunt Sing to post himself at one gate with his men, and the other he made over to Raja Ram Sing. These officers guarded the fortress on all sides with thirty thousand soldiers, all of them Rajputs." Dara himself was only allowed to "enter the fortress twice a day, with a retinue of ten persons, but not to sleep within it. And those within were sworn on the Koran to be faithful to him,—he was afraid of being given poison."

Reports were circulated and sent to the Provinces that the Emperor was dead; and a war of succession was imminent.

Dara assumed the conduct of affairs at Delhi, and levied additional troops there. Shah Shuja marched with a large army from Bengal. Morad prepared for action, and took Surat in the hope of finding much treasure there. Aurungzib proceeded more deliberately and artfully. He raised the siege of Bijapur, and, according to Manucci, secured the neutrality of Sivaji by a very remarkable concession—no less, in fact, than the grant of a fourth part of the Imperial revenue in the Dekkan Provinces, which, he asserts, was recorded on a golden tablet, and was to be perpetual. If this statement is true, the Mahratta claim to *chout* in the Dekkan was thus early and formally sanctioned by Aurungzib himself. And Manucci taxes him with perfidy for ignoring it later.

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The Emperor, partially recovered, announced his convalescence to his absent sons, and ordered them to keep their stations, and renounce their ambitious schemes. But suspecting or assuming that his disease was mortal, and that he was not a free agent, and jealous of Dara's ascendancy at the capital, they evaded compliance, on the plausible ground of the necessity of restoring their father to independence.

The approach of Shuja compelled the Emperor to send an army against him. This was composed of the best troops, under the command of Solaiman Shukoh, Dara's eldest son, accompanied by Jei Sing, Raja of Ambir or Jeipur, and Dilir Khan, an eminent Mogul noble. Jei Sing was well affected to the Emperor, but inimical to Dara, who had highly offended his dignity by flippantly remarking that he looked like a musician—or, as we might say—a fiddler. This circumstance may partly explain the contrast between Jei Sing's conduct and that of the Rajputs, who were generally strongly devoted to the cause of Dara.

Hence Jei Sing was not anxious that Solaiman should confirm his father's ascendancy by a decisive victory over Shuja. Moreover, he was instructed by the Emperor to prevent, if possible, a collision, and to induce Shuja to return to his government. But his remonstrances were ineffectual; and both Princes were eager for the fray. Shuja was defeated;

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but Jei Sing contrived that the pursuit should be slack; and Shuja, with little loss, retreated, and returned to Bengal.

Morad's demonstration was lightly regarded at Delhi. Though he was brave and obstinate, his weak character was known; and it was hoped that he might still be reclaimed to allegiance on hearing of his father's recovery. But Aurungzib's ability and declared intention of subverting Dara's overweening influence were considered far more serious. And the event soon justified these apprehensions.

Aurungzib, secretly resolved to win the great prize, went darkly to work. Hitherto, though employed by his father in the field, he had studiously disclaimed all ambitious views, and had professed to be a religious devotee—a *fakir* in spirit—intent only on his soul's salvation. He now saw that, to gain his object, his first step should be to make a cat's-paw of his simple brother, Morad, and that this would be best effected by posing still in his old attitude. He accordingly wrote to him, repeating the report that Dara had poisoned Shah Jehan, seized the government, and intended to make himself Emperor, and that Shuja was marching against him with the same object. But, denouncing Dara as an infidel and idolater, and Shuja as a heretic, and asserting his own zeal for the orthodox faith, and desire to renounce the world and devote himself to

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religion; he offered to do his utmost to secure Morad's succession, if he would swear on the Koran to protect and provide competently for him and his family. The offer was, of course, guaranteed by the same solemn sanction; and, as a further pledge of his sincerity, Aurungzib sent a large sum of money, and urged his brother to join him promptly. Morad, fired with ambition and blind to Aurungzib's real character and designs, eagerly welcomed the overture, employed the money in increasing his army, and set no store by the warning of a faithful officer, Shahbaz, who mistrusted the good faith of the piously self-abnegating auxiliary.

Meanwhile, Aurungzib had induced the Dekkan army to follow his fortune; and the junction of the two forces was shortly effected.

On this occasion Aurungzib ostentatiously treated his brother in public with the greatest deference, as his future sovereign; and in private redoubled his hypocritical assurances to him.

The Emperor sent repeated orders to them to return to their governments, promising to pardon their rebellion. But Aurungzib persuaded Morad that these were forgeries, and that, should they find their father alive, the necessity of delivering him from Dara's control would justify their persistence, and merit and obtain their forgiveness.

Manucci says that at this time Shah Jehan

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was not secluded, and that he saw him seated at a window for more than half an hour in the presence of a vast concourse. But Aurungzib's partisans at Delhi still maintained that the Emperor's disease was a mortal one, and that his end was near at hand.

Weak as he was, Shah Jehan was very anxious to accompany the army which the continued advance of the combined Princes compelled him to send against them. He hoped by his personal presence to overawe and reclaim them. But Dara was opposed to this; and the direction of the campaign was confided to him. He summoned his son, Solaiman Shukoh, to hasten to his assistance, and meanwhile Jeswunt Sing, the Raja of Joudpur, and Kasim Khan, were sent to obstruct the advance of the rebel Princes through a difficult country. This, according to Manucci, was Shah Jehan's own arrangement. Jeswunt was "the king's loyal subject," but Kasim Khan's disposition was more ambiguous, and "he was not well affected to Dara." Aurungzib's impetuosity baffled these tactics: the Nerbudda and the defiles beyond it were traversed without opposition; and the armies joined battle near Oojein, where the Imperialists were completely defeated, Manucci says, through the treachery and inactivity of Kasim Khan; while the Rajputs fought with their usual bravery, and fell in such numbers that Jeswunt, having lost ten

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thousand men, retreated with only five hundred, and regained his capital with a slender escort. His wife characteristically reviled him for surviving defeat; and domestic harmony was with difficulty restored later through Aurungzib's mediation, when Jeswunt had conformed to the new régime.

Aurungzib's partisans at Delhi strongly recommended his immediate advance on the capital, and, confident of the success of his intrigues there, he reassured Morad and the army by intimating that the Mogul troops of the Emperor would desert Dara at the critical moment.

Manucci confidently asserts that Shah Jehan had been hitherto a free agent, and in the full exercise of his authority; but that, on the announcement of Jeswunt's defeat and retirement, "finding himself in bodily weakness, and desirous of pleasing Dara, he transferred to him all his powers and dignities, and ordered every one to yield him obedience."

Dara rapidly assembled an army of above 100,000 cavalry and 20,000 infantry, with 100 field-pieces, and above 200 European gunners, among whom was Manucci, and a corps of 500 camels, armed with swivel-guns.

The Venetian was much impressed by the brilliant spectacle of this vast array on the march. "It moved over the heights and through the vales like the waves of a stormy sea." On a magnificent elephant, Prince Dara appeared like

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a crystal tower, resplendent as a sun shining over all the land. Around him rode many squadrons of Rajput cavalry, whose armour glittered from afar, and their lances' heads, with a tremulous motion, sent forth rays of light—and so on.

But the imposing spectacle inspired him with little confidence. The flower of the Imperial army had been confided to Prince Solaiman, and had not rejoined. And Manucci misdoubted the quality of the new levies. Most of them, he says, "were not very warlike—they were butchers, barbers, blacksmiths, carpenters, tailors, and such like." He also mistrusted the disposition of the Mogul nobles, among many of whom Dara was not popular. And, he adds: "What disconcerted me was that no one would say that Dara was sure of gaining the battle with all that grand array."

Dara took up a position on the bank of the Chumbul, securing all the passages across the river. But Aurungzib discovered one more remote and unguarded; and, leaving his tents standing, with part of his army, led the rest rapidly through a broken and jungly country, and across the river, and appeared suddenly on Dara's flank..

Manucci thinks that had Dara at once attacked his wayworn division, he would certainly have prevailed over it. But the opportunity was lost, and the enemy was reinforced by the junction of the rest of his army.

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Before the battle began, Manucci, from a hill overlooking the scene of action, observed an ominous symptom of treachery. Many horsemen rode out of Dara's camp to that of the enemy, and did not return.

In front of each army were ranged the guns, and behind them the infantry, armed with muskets, and the camel corps. The cavalry were in the rear. The Princes were all conspicuous on elephants, Dara and Aurungzib in the centre of their respective hosts, and Morad on Aurungzib's left.

Dara was the assailant. He opened the battle by a general discharge of his artillery. But the distance was too great, and the fire ineffective. And Manucci says: "I was much amazed at their making us work thus for nothing." And this great tactical mistake revealed another ominous circumstance. When Dara immediately followed up this idle demonstration by a vehement order for a general advance, and the cavalry rushed to the front, "the barbers, butchers, and the rest turned right about face, abandoning the artillerymen and the guns."

The enemy, more prudently, had reserved his fire, replying only with a few shells. But when Dara's cavalry arrived well within range, a general discharge of cannon, swivel-guns, and musketry arrested the charge, and threw the assailants into disorder. But, well seconded by Rustam Khan, one of his ablest officers, and

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Chhatar Sal, a Rajput chieftain, he rallied them, and the onslaught was resumed with such vigour that they "broke through the guns and penetrated to their opponents' camp, putting to the rout camels and infantry."

Aurungzib sent the greater part of his troops to stem the impetuous tide of war, keeping only a slight body around him, but heartening his men by a notable display of courage and resolution. He ordered his elephant to be chained, to indicate his fixed purpose to conquer or die. But again Dara's impetuous valour prevailed. After a stubborn contest, the reinforcement was worsted, and Dara still advanced. Had he dashed on at once, Aurungzib's fate, Manucci thinks, must have been sealed. But, wearied by their severe exertions, and impeded by the ground, he halted, and gave his men a short breathing-time. And in this position he received tidings which diverted his efforts elsewhere. Chhatar Sal and Rustam Khan had both fallen, but their troops, though wavering, were still resisting. He hastened to their support, and once more prevailed, and put their opponents to the rout.

Meanwhile a desperate contest had been waged between Ram Sing and Prince Morad. Ram Sing and his fiery Rajputs had at last forced their way close up to the Prince's elephant; and some of them had dismounted and leaped on the beast, and were in the act of cutting the

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girths of the howda, when Morad drew a bow, and shot their bold leader in the breast; who fell to the ground, and was trampled to death by the enraged animal. But the Rajputs, so far from being intimidated, were exasperated at the death of their chief, and "battled more violently than ever."

Dara, informed of this, was on the point of joining them, when, according to Khafi Khan, "a rocket struck the howda of his elephant. This alarmed and discouraged him so much that he dismounted in haste from his elephant—and mounted a horse." This may be the true explanation of this precipitate and ill-judged act; though it is not quite reconcilable with Dara's undoubted courage. But Manucci gives a very different reason. Khalilullah Khan, who commanded one of Dara's divisions, but had hitherto hung back, and was in heart a traitor, and who certainly joined Aurungzib immediately after the battle, suggested to Dara that, as the latter was very slenderly guarded, a sudden dash at him would be certain of success, and even more decisive than the capture or death of Morad; and that it was for this purpose that Dara took horse. Whatever the cause, the result was fatal. The disappearance of the leader habitually involves the dispersion and flight of a native army. And there were, in this case, special circumstances which aggravated this tendency. The personal unpopularity of

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Dara among many of his officers, the death of those most devoted to him, Aurungzib's intrigues and denunciation of him as an infidel, the rawness, inexperience, and indiscipline of his new levies, combined to impair the stability of his vast but ill-assorted host. Hence his abrupt disappearance was the signal for an equally abrupt disintegration and flight. Hitherto successful, and on the eve of victory, Dara saw his army melt suddenly away, like a cloud driven before a strong wind. It was not, properly speaking, a defeat. It was rather a general stampede, the result of surprise, perplexity, indiscipline, and deliberate treachery. But the event proved that it was an irretrievable catastrophe; on which account I have described the battle in more detail that I should otherwise have done.

Dara reached Agra in the evening in a state of the deepest dejection. Partly from shame, partly for fear of being there besieged and captured, he did not enter the city. Shah Jehan, who had betaken himself to Agra, sent a consolatory message to him, with hopes that Solaiman's army might still enable him to regain his ground. He also furnished him with an order to the Governor of Delhi, to admit him, and consign to him the great treasure there deposited. But Aurungzib had secured the Governor in his interest; and he refused to open the gates. And Dara pushed on to Lahore,

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where he proposed to assemble a new army, and to renew the contest.

But his hopes of success were soon dashed by the loss of the support on which he had mainly counted. His son Solaiman was a brave and vigorous man, thoroughly devoted to his father's cause. He had already defeated his uncle, Shuja; and his army was the flower of the Imperial forces. But, as I have mentioned, Jei Sing, one of his chief officers, was secretly hostile to Dara, and Dilir Khan, probably not too friendly to him, and under Jei Sing's influence. Hence Aurungzib's overtures to them, backed by his recent victory, shook their fidelity to their commander, and from their timid counsels, recommending a retreat, and intimating that their soldiers were not to be trusted, he saw clearly that they at least were prepared to play him false, and perhaps to deliver him up to the conqueror. He therefore quitted the army, and with a small force escaped to the Raja of Sirinagar, who received him hospitably, and pledged himself to protect him. And his army and his faithless chief officers entered Aurungzib's service.

When the victorious brothers had taken possession of Dara's camp, Aurungzib maintained his previous attitude; congratulated Morad on the result, which he ascribed mainly to Morad's valour; treated him with the greatest deference as his future sovereign, and intro-

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duced to him the traitor Khalilullah as a loyal subject, devoted to his interest, of which he had given such recent and substantial evidence.

Four days after the battle, the victorious Princes arrived before Agra.

Manucci was already there; and he describes minutely the gradual and artful process by which the Emperor was dethroned, and forcibly secluded in one quarter of his vast fortress-palace. The united army was posted, in the first instance, about two miles from the city.

Aurungzib made profuse professions of affection and fidelity to his father, and justified his action on the ground of Dara's usurpation of authority and criminal ambition. The Emperor gave him fair words, but, according to Manucci, tried to entrap him into a personal interview—with no lenient intentions. But Aurungzib was too wary, and excused himself. Meanwhile he was actively engaged in winning over the chief nobles, and disposing them to acquiesce in his masterful proceedings. Many indeed were already his decided partisans; Dara's sympathisers who had not fallen or fled were disheartened and cowed, and self-interest attracted the undecided to the winning side.

Thus Aurungzib was emboldened to deal strongly and decisively with his father. He made his son, Sultan Mahmood, Governor of the city; and he was authorised to invest the

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fort, and allow no one to enter it. Aurungzib's troops were moved into the city, and closed upon the fort. The Emperor, for three days, tried to repel them by firing on them, but they took shelter in the adjacent houses. Then the artillerymen, who had been tampered with by Aurungzib's agents, showed symptoms of desertion, some letting themselves down from the walls by ropes. Whereupon the garrison, in despair, prepared to follow their example. Aurungzib still maintained his hypocritical attitude; pleaded illness, which had prevented him from waiting on the Emperor, and that, while he was laid up, his impatient soldiers had acted without orders; and he proposed that his son, Sultan Mahmood, should visit the Emperor, and arrange matters *à l'aimable*. To this Shah Jehan consented. The Prince had instructions to secure the gate, introduce his troops, and make himself master of the fort. In this he succeeded, and the Emperor was restricted to the palace.

Then, master of the position, Aurungzib threw off *one* mask, and plainly announced to his father that he was no longer fit to rule, but must take his ease in retirement, and leave the burden of government to be sustained by more capable hands—in other words, that he was dethroned and a prisoner. And, suiting the action to the implied significance of this declaration, he demanded, through his son, the keys of the palace. And, as the inmates were very numerous

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and a close blockade was established, and no provisions were allowed to enter, the forlorn monarch was constrained to comply with the demand. Then the palace itself was occupied, many gates were closed, and guards were placed at the entrance of the *zenana*, to which Shah Jehan was thenceforth closely restricted.

Thus his reign came to an end, though the succession was still undecided, and the ex-*fakir* still professed to be acting only on behalf of Morad's candidature.

The easy and complete success of this audacious, unfilial, and treasonable proceeding encouraged its deviser to remove his second mask, and disclose his real features as the avowed pretender to the vacant throne. Morad's friends recommended him to leave the pursuit of Dara to his brother, and with his own army to secure Agra and reduce Delhi. But he preferred to accompany Aurungzib. The two armies marched separately, at a mile's distance from each other, and halted at six miles south of Mathura. The ostensible reason for this halt was the proposed formal elevation of Morad to the throne. Elaborate preparations for the ceremony were made: Aurungzib was all smiles, congratulation, and flattery; and to inaugurate the august function, invited his brother to a great banquet. But he arranged that his chief officers should entertain Morad's at their own quarters.

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The eunuch Shahbaz and other faithful followers of the infatuated Prince suspected foul play, and strongly dissuaded him from putting himself in his brother's power. And Manucci, who was out of employment, but had disguised himself as a holy mendicant, and as such had the free run of the armies, gathered from the ambiguous gossip in Aurungzib's camp that mischief was brewing. But Morad was in high spirits, and, imperturbably relying on his brother's sworn fidelity, went to the feast. Aurungzib, discarding on this great occasion his religious scruples, took care that Morad should be well plied with wine, and allowed to retire to sleep off its effects, while the banquet still proceeded. In this helpless condition Morad was disarmed, fettered, placed in a covered howda on an elephant, and sent off at speed during the night to Delhi, escorted by four thousand cavalry. Another similar cortège was dispatched to Agra to baffle pursuit, should an attempt be made to rescue the prisoner. But the darkness of the night, the continuance of the feast, and the dispersion of Morad's officers, prevented this, and in the morning Aurungzib's agents saluted him as Emperor, and Morad's officers were invited to enter the usurper's service, with a promise of double pay, which, after some hesitation, in their desperate circumstances, they did.

On arriving at Delhi the unhappy Prince

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was publicly paraded as a prisoner, previous to his being consigned to the fortress of Selimgurh. "It was," says Manucci, "very pitiful to see poor Morad Buksh make this miserable entry into Delhi, visible to all, his face dejected, wearing a blue turban, ill put on; behind him an executioner with a naked sword in his hand, ready upon any attempt at rescue to cut off his head. It seemed as if some criminal were being borne to the scaffold."

Aurungzib, on the other hand, lost no time in revealing the object, and reaping the fruit, of his hypocrisy and treachery.

"Hardly," says Manucci, "had Morad Buksh fallen into his hands, Dara and Solaiman Shukoh been defeated, and his father imprisoned, than he proclaimed himself Emperor. He conferred many distinctions and gifts on the men of Shah Jehan, Dara, Morad Buksh, and Solaiman Shukoh, who came over to his side, thereby the more easily to gain their adherence."

Manucci, who had joined in the flight to Agra, was eager to re-enter the service of Dara; and, after an adventurous and dangerous journey, rejoined him at Lahore. The unhappy Prince received him most graciously, contrasted his fidelity with the desertion of so many on whom he had long lavished his bounty, presented him with a horse and five hundred rupees, and raised his pay from eighty to one hundred and

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fifty rupees a month. He had already raised a new army of thirty thousand men, mostly Moguls, Seiads, and Pathans. He had also strong hope of assistance from a certain Raja Surup Sing, and gave him a large sum of money to secure his fidelity to his sworn engagement. But the Raja went off with the money; shirked his engagement, and paid no heed to Dara's urgent remonstrances.

Daud Khan was Dara's ablest and staunchest partisan. But Aurungzib, by the usual trick of a letter, purposely intercepted, and implying a treacherous understanding between himself and Daud Khan, shook Dara's confidence in the latter. And though Daud denounced the letter as a forgery, and made every effort to reassure Dara, persisting in following his fortune on the resumption of Dara's flight, he was at last formally dismissed, and joined Aurungzib, though with an understanding that he was not to serve against his old master.

Dara next attempted to reach Cabul, *en route* for Persia. But the Governor, Mahabat Khan, discouraged this plan; and Dara's mind seems to have been divided between a resolution to fight out the quarrel in India, and a project of reaching Persia by sea. He marched, with a very reduced force, to Multan, closely pursued by Aurungzib, and thence to Bakkar, which Dara determined to occupy in force, as a strong *place d'armes* and rallying-point, if, as he hoped,

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he could raise a new army in Guzerat. He gave the command of this to a valiant eunuch, Khwajah Basant, or, as Manucci calls him, as a European equivalent, Primivera, *i.e.* "Spring-time." The garrison consisted of two thousand select men and twenty-two Europeans, with abundance of food, guns, ammunition, and other supplies. Bahadur Khan, sent on in pursuit by Aurungzib, was close on his track; and Dara, with a small and an ever-dwindling force, pushed on for Tattah. Manucci was very anxious to accompany him. But Dara insisted that he would be more useful—as an artillerist—in the defence of the fort. He made him Captain of the Europeans, doubled his pay, and gave him five thousand rupees to divide among his men, recommending him earnestly to the eunuch commandant.

Aurungzib, detaching a force to pursue Dara, had left Multan, and gone off towards Agra, to confront Shah Shuja, who was marching thither with a large army from Bengal. On his way he was met by Raja Jei Sing, who, on Solaiman's flight, had gone over to Aurungzib and was confirmed in his new allegiance by profuse promises of favour. He was appointed Governor of Delhi, and the province of Sambha was conferred on him. Though at enmity with Dara, Jei Sing was much attached to Shah Jehan, a cause of no little anxiety to his new master.

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Dara, with six thousand horsemen, proceeded through Cutch to Guzerat, where the Governor of Ahmedabad, the provincial capital, though his daughter was married to Aurungzib, surrendered the city, on the alleged ground that "it was not correct that he, a vassal, should oppose a royal prince, heir to the Empire." Thus Aurungzib's moral victory over his eldest brother was by no means complete. And Shah Nawaz Khan joined Dara, was present in the final battle, and was murdered in cold blood by Aurungzib's general, after it was over.

The fort of Bakkar meanwhile was closely invested by Khalilullah Khan. But the defence was obstinate and prolonged. How it fell at last I shall explain later. "Dara's plan," says Manucci, who was engaged in the operations, "was that if he did not succeed in the province of Gujarat, and suffered defeat, this fortress of Bakhar would serve as a base to help him again."

Aurungzib found Shuja strongly entrenched in a position near the village of Bajwah in the Fathpur district. His assaults were repulsed. And in the night, Raja Jeswunt Sing suddenly changed sides and attacked Aurungzib's camp in the rear, while Shuja assailed the army in front. A desperate contest followed; Aurungzib displayed great presence of mind and constancy, rallied his disordered forces, and in the end gained a complete victory. Jeswunt Sing, on

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Shuja's defeat, retired to his own country. Aurungzib committed the prosecution of the war against Shuja to Mir Jumla, one of the ablest generals of the time, sending with him his eldest son, Sultan Mahmood, "but without a command." Shah Shuja was compelled to retreat successively to Allahabad, Benares, Mongir, and Rajmahal. Thence he was dislodged from an entrenched position by Jumla's artillery; and took up another strongly fortified near Dacca, while Mir Jumla halted, during the monsoon in that city. Sultan Mahmood, resenting bitterly his insignificant position, actually went over to Shah Shuja, and married his daughter. But Shuja seems to have conceived suspicion of his fidelity; his position became awkward, and he returned to his father's army, was ordered to Court, and consigned to Gwalior. The campaign was prolonged. But at last Shuja, despairing of success, and too well aware of what awaited him if he fell into his brother's hands, retired to Arakan, where he was at first well received by the King, but later maltreated, and impeded in his desire to make his way by sea to Persia. And in a disturbance that followed, he was killed, thus removing another obstacle to Aurungzib's ambition.

But while the contest with Shah Shuja was being waged, Dara had mustered in Guzerat an army of thirty thousand horsemen, and marched

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northwards, relying on Jeswunt Sing's promised co-operation. But Aurungzib contrived, through Jei Sing's influence, and lavish promises of forgiveness for his recent treachery, and high favour in his own service, to neutralise him; and he remained quiescent. This defection reduced Dara to a most embarrassing and almost desperate condition. He had arrived in the neighbourhood of Ajmir. His army was unequal to cope with Aurungzib's forces. To retreat would be difficult, and would discourage his men, and be the signal for desertion. His only alternative was to entrench himself in a strong position among the hills, which he did. For three days he successfully resisted Aurungzib's assaults, and by daring sallies did much execution on the enemy. But on the fourth day, according to Khafi Khan, a hill in the rear of his position was occupied, and an effective attack thence delivered. According to Manucci, Aurungzib induced Dilir Khan, one of his chief officers, to make an overture to Dara, promising to desert to him, and thus Dilir obtained an entrance within the lines, and in the crisis of the battle turned his force against Dara's with fatal effect. "Dara's army fell into the greatest confusion, and, without making any stand or resistance, the whole of them took to flight." "The fallen Prince had only time to carry off his family and the chief valuables lying in his tents."

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Jei Sing and Bahadur Khan were sent to pursue him—"their orders were to seize him, dead or alive."

On his way to Ahmedabad he was rejoined by many of the fugitives. But the governor of the city had been gained over by Aurungzib, and refused to admit him. And several of his most intimate adherents now deserted him. With two thousand men he resumed his flight for Sind, suffering much by the way, intending to rally again at Bakkar. But, finding it closely invested by Khalilullah Khan, he once more resolved to make his way to Persia.

Though personally inimical to Dara, Jei Sing was not anxious to capture him, but to drive him from India. Hence he contrived to delay the pursuit so as to enable the fugitive to effect his escape.

On the frontier was a Pathan chieftain, Jiwan Khan, who was under special obligations to Dara, who had thrice saved his life when Shah Jehan had condemned him to death. To him he applied for protection. Jiwan Khan gave him fair words. But, anxious to curry favour with Aurungzib, he treacherously surrounded Dara and his family, and strictly secluded them. Dara's favourite wife, in despair, poisoned herself. And when Jei Sing and Bahadur Khan arrived in pursuit, Dara was made over to them; "chains were put upon his legs and manacles upon his wrists, and four

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elephants conveyed him and his family and suite, closely guarded."

At Bakkar, which was still holding out, the force escorting the unhappy Prince and his family, appeared suddenly, and were fired upon. But the eunuch in command was promptly informed of the fact of Dara's capture, and summoned to surrender. This he refused to do without Dara's sanction. This was obtained, and the fort was evacuated.

At Delhi the pitiful spectacle presented by Morad Buksh was repeated. Dara, with his son, Sipihr Shukoh, was paraded on an elephant in an uncovered howda, behind them a man with a drawn sword, and round him horsemen also with drawn swords. For two hours he was thus exhibited in front of the palace, and thence transferred to a garden.

Aurungzib, affecting indecision as to his fate, consulted his council, who, well knowing his mind, and the line he had taken against his brother at the outset, with one dissentient voice decreed his death, not only for the public security, but " by reason of his being an idolater, without any religion, and an enemy of the Mahomedan faith." So says Manucci. Khafi Khan's statement is :—

" The order was given for Dara Shukoh to be put to death under a legal opinion of the lawyers, because he had apostatised from the law, had vilified religion, and had allied himself with

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heresy and infidelity." He adds: "After he was slain, his body was placed on a howda and carried round the city. So once alive and once dead he was exposed to the eyes of all men, and many wept over his fate. He was buried in the tomb of Humayun. Sipihr Shukoh was ordered to be imprisoned in the fortress of Gwalior."

Manucci tells a ghastly story—that Aurungzib sent Dara's head to be served up to the captive Emperor in a box, at his dinner; and that the miserable parent was overwhelmed at the sight with grief and horror. This may be true, but it is to be hoped, for the honour of humanity, that it was a bazaar rumour.

Dara's son, Solaiman Shukoh, as I have mentioned, had taken refuge with the Raja of Sirinagar.

Jei Sing was employed to induce the Raja to give him up. But, faithful to the obligation of hospitality, and relying on his secluded and strong country, he scouted the allurements and threats of the usurping and insidious Emperor. But his son was more amenable to them. Solaiman, aware of this, endeavoured to escape into Tibet, but was pursued by the Raja's son, captured, manacled, and handed over to Aurungzib's agents, sent to Gwalior, and there poisoned. The old Raja of Sirinagar, Manucci says, "felt greatly the vileness of the deed carried out by his only son," and—in a short space—he ended his days under the disgrace.

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Thus by force and fraud the ex-*fakir* had removed one obstacle after another to his undisputed attainment of the object of his secret ambition. But one crowning act of villainy was still requisite before he could feel himself secure. Morad Buksh might still give him trouble. For, as Manucci says, "many nobles had friendship and affection for him, and wanted him for king, owing to his renown as good soldier and liberal master." And he had attempted to escape.

As in Dara's case, the Emperor endeavoured to throw the responsibility for his death on others. Morad had put to death a secretary, when Governor of Guzerat. The relatives were secretly incited to prosecute the blood feud judicially. But they declined. But a poor cousin was bribed to bring a capital charge before a *kazi* duly tutored for the purpose, and the Prince was condemned to death, and murdered in his prison. Khafi Khan says that "His gracious Majesty rewarded the eldest son for not enforcing his claim of blood."

Such a refinement of hypocrisy is quite characteristic of Aurungzib, and winds up appropriately his conduct in relation to his deluded victim.

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III

RESULTS OF AURUNGZIB'S USURPATION

In tracing the causes of the decline of the Mogul Empire under Aurungzib, his conduct previous to his accession must be taken into account. For, though he removed all obstacles to his ambition, his triumph was dearly bought. He had given a great shock to the Imperial authority; impaired its moral influence; abjured its character as the impartial and, so to speak, undenominational sway of a paternal sovereign over all his subjects; and set an example of what I may call political parricide, which was only too likely to be imitated in due time by his posterity. Thus, however successful at the moment, he had sown a plentiful crop of troubles, disaffection, and consequent weakness for the future.

The deposition and close imprisonment of his father was an audacious innovation — a breach of allegiance, and an act of high treason perpetrated against an eminent and able monarch; and an act of cruelty to an indulgent father, in violation of the primary instincts and obligations of humanity. As such, it must have

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sent a thrill of indignation and horror through the heart of the Empire, and effectually arrested the flow of the old sentiments of reverence and devotion to the Head of the State, which Akbar and his successors had inspired. This revolting impression was deepened by the fate to which he had consigned his eldest and youngest brothers, and by the hypocritical expedients which he had employed for their destruction. Like Pilate, he had washed his hands, and affected to be guiltless of their blood. But, like Henry VIII., he had poisoned the fountains of justice by murdering them judicially. And the simple Morad had been led, like a lamb to the slaughter, by an elaborate tissue of sanctimonious treachery. Genuine loyalty, personal devotion to such a man, were out of the question: he could neither be loved, respected, nor trusted; and must rely, for obedience, on fear, force, cunning, and self-interested compliance.

While these remarks apply to his subjects generally, the Hindoos had special and more personal reasons of estrangement from the new Emperor. The attitude he had assumed, and the pretence which had been alleged for the execution of Dara, obviously indicated a new and to them unfriendly departure in Imperial policy. Whether Aurungzib was, or was not, sincere in hoisting the banner of the Crescent against his eldest brother, and justifying his exclusion from the succession, and his execution,

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on the ground of his sympathy with the Hindoo religion (as one historian distinctly states) the Hindoos must have felt that such a war-cry, followed by a capital condemnation in the same sense, was an appeal to the hitherto discountenanced but lurking spirit of Mussulman fanaticism and political exclusiveness, and boded no good to them, under the dominion of him who had, on the strength of it, won his way to the throne.

Such a conviction must have made them rebels in their hearts from the first, though the smouldering fire of disaffection was for the time suppressed.

While such were the impressions produced by Aurungzib's conduct on the minds and hearts of his subjects, Nemesis was at work in his own bosom. The stings of conscience he might ignore, or alleviate them by his strong delusion that he was the fated and favoured instrument of Heaven. But he could not shut his eyes to the danger of his sons availing themselves of his unpopularity to retaliate upon him his treatment of Shah Jehan. And in his lonely eminence, conscious of his own falseness, and judging others by himself, he was infinitely suspicious of all men.

Hence he adopted a system of minute supervision, secret espionage, checks and counter-checks on officials, limitation of the discretion and means of his employés, double appointments

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of military commanders, resulting in mutual jealousies, disputes, and counteraction, and capricious supersession, which, besides betokening want of confidence, and so chilling zeal for the service, clogged the machine of civil government, and compromised the continuity and systematic prosecution of military operations; and thus greatly contributed to make his administration ineffective and his arms unprosperous.

Thus his ambition in the end over-leaped itself; and his exaltation involved a humiliating decadence of his power, and of the Empire, of which he was the evil genius.

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IV

AURUNGZIB'S NEW POLICY

How Aurungzib came to adopt a course so different from that of his predecessors, so obviously inexpedient from a political point of view, and so fatal in its result, might seem strange, did not history present many analogous phenomena. His conduct is usually accounted for by his intense bigotry, if not fanaticism, which blinded him to the inevitable consequences of his rash proceedings, like his contemporary James II.,

"The Ass
Who lost three Kingdoms for a Mass."

There is no doubt truth in this view, but I believe that it is not the whole truth, and that though he was a Mahometan *dévot*, he had also a political object in his persecution of the Hindoos which was congenial to his natural character, and confirmed by the circumstances of his rivalry with his brother Dara. Even of James II. Hallam says that it seems difficult to determine whether love of Popery or love of despotism was the stronger incentive to his mad course. And, considering how unscrupulously and hypo-

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critically Aurungzib made political capital of his orthodoxy to enlist Morad, his youngest brother, in the campaign against the alleged infidel claimant of the throne, and to rid himself of Dara in the end by a capital sentence on the same ground, it might be even surmised that his zeal for the faith was a mere cloak to cover his ambitious design of making himself Emperor; which he retained as a justification of his violence and cruelty. But this is inconsistent with a more intimate knowledge of the man and his later conduct. There can, I think, be no doubt that he was a real zealot and stickler for the Koran and its injunctions on their own account. But it does not therefore follow that religious zeal alone actuated him.

That he should have been attached to his traditional faith was natural; for, being a man of narrow intellect, with no speculative tendency, he was not tempted to depart from it; while it suited his morose temper, it encouraged his ambition by its promises of divine aid to the champion of the faith; and in its fatalism it enabled him to lay a flattering unction to his soul, that though his means might be crooked, his end—the ascendancy of Islam—would cover a multitude of sins, and that, even in their commission, he was but acting out a predestined career. This strong delusion seems to have sustained him through his long and arduous life, but to have failed at the last, and left him

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miserably uncertain, and seriously apprehensive of his fate in the after-world. His last utterance in substance amounts to a palinode of his life-long confidence in the divine condonation of Jehu-like faith without works of mercy and genuine morality.

To appreciate the political object, which in practice coincided with Aurungzib's religious bigotry, we must consider his personal character, and his position when he entered the lists against Dara Shukoh. Austere in morals, self-centred, and reserved, he was neither subject to zenana influences nor swayed by favourites. Indeed, he seems to have had no intimate personal friends. His strength of will amounted to obstinacy, and made him impervious alike to the counsels of ministers, to prudential considerations, and to the lessons of experience. Indefatigable in the pursuit of his own objects, he was equally ready to face difficulty, danger, and suffering himself, and regardless of the feelings, the sentiments, and the interests of others. Proud, imperious, suspicious, and vigilant, he was a proficient in cunning statecraft, in inspiring awe, guarding against conspiracies, and maintaining his personal authority; but deficient in real statesmanship and comprehensive insight into the fundamental conditions of his power, and the impolicy of abusing it. Cold-hearted, exacting, unsympathetic, and censorious on slight or inadequate grounds

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to his ablest and most trusty Mahometan servants, towards his Hindoo subjects he was haughty, supercilious, and contemptuous: too indifferent to them to appreciate their better qualities, but keenly alive and antipathetic to their strange, and, in his eyes, barbarous peculiarities, to the grossness of their vulgar superstitions, and the licentiousness of many of their popular rites.

Moreover, he despised and vilipended the Hindoos as an inferior and conquered race, who, by Akbar's innovating policy had been allowed to usurp a position of political and social equality with their natural masters, which was equally inappropriate and undesirable.

Thus, apart from his religious bigotry, to such a man as Aurungzib, who was, moreover, the son of a Tartar mother, it would seem as anomalous and improper that the Hindoos should be placed on a level with the northern races, as in the Middle Ages it would have appeared to the Anglo-Irish of the pale that the Celtic population—the "wild Irish," as they were called—should be incorporated with them on equal terms; and to the jealous maintainers of Protestant ascendancy in Ireland, in the eighteenth century, that the Roman Catholics should be placed on a political and social level with themselves. That his predecessors had so treated them would, to so

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proud, self-opinionated, and self-willed a man, be no convincing argument for his continuing to do so; and all the less so, when he considered that the most serious obstacle to his ambition had been the result of this treatment, the political prominence and military power of the Rajputs, and their enthusiastic devotion to Dara, from his extreme liberalism, and alleged sympathy with their religion.

Hence he was inclined to reverse the policy of his ancestors; and not only to regard, but to treat the Hindoos as an inferior race; to brand them with the old stamp of subjection—the *jizya*—which Akbar had abolished; and thus prepare the way for their depression in the social scale, the sapping of their political influence, and their eventual reduction to the status of a subject population, dominated by the privileged class, on whose rightful ascendancy they had been allowed to encroach.

The time when the *jizya* was reimposed, in 1677, tends to confirm the view that I have taken of the mixed motives that suggested the measure. For many years the precept of the Koran, that the conquered infidel should be taxed as such, had been ignored, and allowed to remain a dead letter. But in the interval events had occurred which, while they must have mitigated the Emperor's contempt for the Hindoos, had greatly inflamed his animosity against them, and inclined him to avenge himself

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upon them for the successful uprising of the despised race in the South, and the challenge of his authority, as the representative of foreign and Mahometan sway, by the foundation of a Hindoo anti-polity. The crushed worm had turned, and had been transformed into a mordant viper. Sivaji had successfully resisted his generals in the field; had outwitted him, when he had tried to entrap him at Delhi; had afterwards consolidated his independent power, ravaged the Imperial provinces with impunity, and assumed the position of a Hindoo sovereign. Such outrageous presumption was calculated to exasperate the Emperor to the utmost, and to rouse his vindictive spirit against the whole detested race; to induce him to adopt a policy of depression in his dealings with his Hindoo subjects, and, by the assumption of this disparaging attitude, under the sanction of the Koran, to enlist the sympathies and stimulate the zeal of his Mahometan subjects and his foreign Mahometan immigrants for the prosecution of what Khafi Khan calls the "holy war" against the Mahrattas. Thus his tardy conformity to the precept of the Koran seems to have been occasioned by his exasperation, and his resolve to lower the Hindoo crest at home, on the eve of a great personal effort to bring the defiant natives of the South within the scope of his tyrannical and degrading sway.

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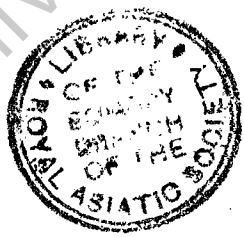
Lastly, it is a significant circumstance, that Khafi Khan states that the *jizya* was imposed with the object of not only "distinguishing the land of the faithful from an infidel land," but also of "*curbing the infidels.*"



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V

SIVAJI'S CAREER

THE Mogul Empire had gradually pushed its way into the Dekkan, and had destroyed some, threatened, weakened, and rendered tributary others, of the older Mahometan kingdoms which existed there. Under Shah Jehan Ahmednuggur had been finally incorporated as a province of the Empire. But farther south Bijapur and Golconda, or Hyderabad, still remained separate and almost independent, though overawed and assailed by Prince Aurungzib.

On the conquest of Ahmednuggur, one of its sturdiest defenders, Sahu (otherwise Shahji), a Mahratta officer, had transferred his allegiance to the King of Bijapur, who had bestowed on him some *jaghires*, or benefices, in the outlying districts of the Western Ghats—not far from Bombay. Shahji was non-resident. He was said to be, on his mother's side, of Rajput descent. And he had a son, Sivaji, who combined the Rajput gallantry and love of warlike adventure with the extremely astute and wily disposition characteristic of the Mahrattas. The youth grew up in a region, and at a season,

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well calculated to develop and crown with success his daring project of achieving for himself and his tribesmen political independence. He was the manager of his father's districts. The country around was wild, broken, and dense with jungles and forests. The steep hill-tops, which studded it in profusion, were crowned with rudely constructed but, from their situation, often formidable forts. Deep ravines and gloomy defiles favoured partisan warfare, and made the approaches of regular troops difficult and dangerous. The humid climate was ill suited to the inhabitants of the lower country, and the frequent and heavy rains and violent tempests were a serious obstacle to military operations, and involved great hardship and danger to an invader, unfamiliar with the country and inexperienced in warfare on such a scene.

This strong country was peopled partly by Mahrattas, partly by more primitive tribes; but both classes were distinguished for hardihood, enterprise, cunning, and love of independence and plunder.

The central authority at Bijapur was weak, distracted by internal dissensions during a minority, and by the threatening attitude and aggressive movements of Shah Jehan's representative—Prince Aurungzib. The young Sivaji saw his opportunity, and, several years before the Prince became the Emperor, entered on

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an ingenious, daring, and systematic course of self-aggrandisement and ambition. But never was a great revolution begun more quietly and unostentatiously. A movement which was to pervade and convulse all India took its rise, like one of the Dekkan rivers (so to speak), in a corner, and in the bosom of the hills.

Sivaji, by good management and popular arts, secured the devotion of his dependents, and attracted daily new followers. He strengthened the defences of his father's districts; summarily annexed others, in the absence of their holders, who had gone to pay court to the rising Mogul sun. "This," says the Mogul historian, Khafi Khan, "was the beginning of that system of violence which he and his descendants have spread over the rest of the Kokan and all the territory of the Dakhin. Whenever he heard of a prosperous town, or of a district inhabited by thriving cultivators, he plundered it and took possession of it. Before the *jagirdars* in those troublous times could appeal to Bijapur, he had sent in his own account of the matter, with presents and offerings, charging the *jagirdars*, or proprietors, with some offence which he had felt called upon to punish, and offering to pay some advanced amount for the lands on their being attached to his own *jagir*, or to pay their revenues direct to the Government. He communicated these matters to the officials at Bijapur, who in

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those disturbed times took little heed of what any one did. So, when the *jagirdar's* complaint arrived, he obtained no redress, because no one took any notice of it" (Elliot, vii. 257).

This he explains by the negligence, corruption, and selfish preoccupation of the officials, and the diversion of government to more serious menaces elsewhere. Hence he continues: "The reins of authority over that country fell into his hands, and he at length became the most notorious of all the rebels. He assembled a large force of Mahratta robbers and plunderers, and set about reducing fortresses. The first fort he reduced was that of Chandan (Grant Duff says Torna was his first capture). After that he got possession of some other fortresses which were short of supplies, or were in charge of weak or inexperienced commandants. Evil days fell upon the kingdom of Bijapur. The operations of Aurungzib against that country when he was a prince in the reign of his father brought great evil upon the country, and other troubles also arose. Sivaji day by day increased in strength, and reduced all the forts of the country, so that in course of time he became a man of power and means. He had drawn together a large force, and, protected by mountains and jungles full of trees, he ravaged and plundered in all directions, far and wide. The inaccessible forts of Rajgarh and Chakna were his abodes, and he had secured

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several islands in the sea by means of a fleet which he had formed. He built several forts also in those parts, so that altogether he had forty forts, all of which were well supplied with provisions and munitions of war" (Elliot, vii. 258).

Such is the account of the rise of the heroic leader of the Hindoo reaction given by a historian who was engaged in Aurungzib's service, and who, while he hated Sivaji as an infidel dog, and denounced him as an arch-rebel and past-master in the art of plundering, was not insensible to his military skill and formidable capacity as the creator and organiser of an anti-Imperial polity. I have, therefore, quoted it at length. But I must continue more summarily.

This sudden and portentous growth of predatory power was doubly owing to Aurungzib. The above account ascribes the neglect of the growing danger to the distracted attention of the Bijapur Government caused by that Prince's operations against it. And when he quitted the Dekkan in quest of the Imperial throne, he left the scene open to Sivaji's enterprise, unchecked by the presence of the Mogul army.

Thus the establishment of Sivaji's power, which might otherwise have been crushed in its early stage, was indirectly at least not a little due to Aurungzib himself.

A complete account of the reign of Aurungzib would include a narrative of his so-called conquest

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of Assam. But this is not necessary for our purpose.

It is, however, desirable to observe that the conquest was incomplete and ephemeral; that the sufferings of the troops employed, and the loss of life, were great; that Mir Jumla, one of the Emperor's most distinguished generals, was worn out, and died at the close of the campaign; and that this ambitious and ill-advised scheme of annexation exhibited abundant premonitory symptoms of the dangerous and exhausting tendency of such a policy of remote aggression, where the country and the climate fought on the side of the enemy. But the warning was lost on the Emperor.

The Bijapur Government undertook to suppress the formidable rebel. Afzal Khan, an eminent officer, was sent against him. Sivaji was a many-sided man. He could fight well on occasion. But, like Mahrattas in general, he preferred to prevail by stratagem. He now professed a desire of reconciliation with his sovereign, and, affecting timidity, obtained a private interview with the unwary general, and assassinated him. Rejoining his followers, he incited them to fresh efforts, and became more formidable than before. He defeated another Bijapur general, who had been sent to avenge Afzal; increased the number of his forts; organised the government of his territory; ravaged vigorously that of Bijapur; plundered

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caravans, and rendered the open country everywhere insecure.

Though he respected mosques, copies of the Koran (which he gave to his Mahometan followers, for he had such in his service), and *free* women, this conduct was a direct and bold challenge to the Emperor's authority in the Dekkan; and he now prepared to assert it, and accomplish what Bijapur had failed to do. But little did the proud and powerful Sovereign anticipate that he was thus pledging himself to a lifelong and fruitless enterprise, and signing, in effect, the death-warrant of the Empire!

Shaista Khan was deputed to conduct the war, assisted by Jeswunt Sing. In January 1666 he began his operations. Supa, Poona, and Sivapur were occupied without opposition. Sivaji, Parthian-like, retired; but only to harass the Imperial army on its march, and seize every opportunity of annoying and plundering it. In vain a special force was detached to prevent this. The Mahrattas were too nimble to be effectually guarded against, or chastised. Chakan was then besieged. But the defence was long and desperate. Sivaji, from without, co-operated with the garrison. The besiegers suffered severely, both in the operations and from the heavy rains. The native historian says plaintively: "The muskets were rendered useless, the powder spoilt, the bows deprived of their strings"; and the troops were disgusted and disheartened.

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At last the place was taken by *capitulation*. But such an opening of the war was inauspicious, and too significant of its destined course. The next incident was still more disconcerting. Shaista Khan had taken up his quarters in Sivaji's own house at Poona, and strict injunctions were issued that no Mahratta was to be allowed to enter the town. But Sivaji's audacity, ingenuity, and humour made him an unrivalled partisan leader, and helped him now to achieve one of his most notable feats. On the pretence of escorting a bridal procession, a number of his men gained admittance. Others had the impudence to effect their entrance in the guise of triumphant captors of a party of Mahrattas, whom they dragged along through the streets. At night, Sivaji, at the head of the united body, fell suddenly on Shaista Khan's quarters. His son, and an officer who resembled him, were killed. Shaista Khan himself lost a thumb in the scuffle, and owed his life to two slave girls, who hid him in a corner. The assailants caused the commandant's drums to be beaten, and in the noise and confusion effected their escape without loss. Shaista Khan evidently suspected Jeswunt Sing's lukewarmness, if not complicity, in this affair. He met his condolence with the significant remark: "I thought the Maharaja was in his Majesty's service when such an evil befel me." And the Emperor "passed censure both upon the Khan (*i.e.*

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Shaista) and Raja Jeswunt." He recalled Shaista, and replaced him by Prince Moazzam. But Jeswunt was still employed under him.

The prospect darkened under the new régime. Sivaji grew still bolder, constantly assailed the Imperial territory and convoys, seized two forts on the shore near Surat, and thence intercepted naval traffic; and even fell on the pilgrim ships, bound for Mecca, a grave profanity in the eyes of the devout Aurungzib. This assault on his religion was followed up by a daring insult to his political pride. Sivaji began to give himself royal airs, and coined money of his own. Prince Moazzam was apparently not equal to the emergency. He too was therefore recalled, and a new plan was adopted. Sivaji was said to have Rajput blood in his veins, and his military capacity was now well established. But a pure-blooded Rajput Prince, who was also an eminent and zealous imperial general, might be well adapted both to cope with him in the field, and to overawe and negotiate with him, and by force and moral influence combined induce him to submit to the Imperial authority. The result seemed, for the time, to justify the experiment. Jei Sing [the Raja of Jeipur] promptly captured Poorundhur, one of Sivaji's strongest fortresses; and for five months carried fire and sword into his territory, reducing much of it to a desert. Not, however, without retaliation. "The sudden

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attacks by the enemy," says Khafi Khan, "their brilliant success, their assaults in dark nights, their seizure of the roads and difficult passes, and the firing of the jungles full of trees, severely tried the Imperial forces, and men and beasts in great numbers perished" (vii. 273). Still Jei Sing persevered; and was fortunate enough to blockade closely Rajgarh, in which were Sivaji's wife and maternal relatives. For their sake, and probably finding himself overmatched for the time, and hoping to profit by the racial and religious sympathies of the Rajput, Sivaji opened negotiations; and, being well received, and led to expect not only pardon, but favour and office from the Emperor, he came to terms; agreed to surrender his principal forts (retaining twelve small ones), to enter the Imperial service, and to send his young son, as a hostage for his own fidelity, to Delhi. Aurungzib readily ratified the agreement, and Sivaji marched with Jei Sing against Bijapur, and much distinguished himself in the campaign, especially in fort-taking. At its close, he and his son Sambaji were sent to Delhi, *at his own request*; had an audience of the Emperor; and were graciously received.

Thus the Mahratta troubles seemed to be ended, and Aurungzib's kingcraft to have attained its object. But the end was *not* yet.

The recorded account of the reconciliation and renewed breach between these two remark-

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able men suggests questions which it is difficult to answer at all confidently. But I will endeavour, as they occur, to state what the character of each, and the circumstances of the case, seem to indicate as the most probable conclusions. The first question arises out of what I have already related.

How far was the formal reconciliation, *ab initio*, concluded in good faith, on either side? That Aurungzib, informed of Sivaji's wholesale surrender of the keys of his position—his strong forts, assumed that he had drawn the viper's fangs, and that it had therefore ceased to be dangerous, seems not improbable. And Sivaji's putting himself and his son into the Emperor's power at Delhi, was a strong additional reason for inferring that he really meant to mend his manners, and look to Aurungzib as his patron. The Emperor also probably relied much on Jei Sing's assurances of Sivaji's political conversion. Thus he might be inclined not only at the moment to hail with satisfaction the convenient pacification, but to try the experiment of permanently reclaiming the formidable filibuster, by condoning his offences and admitting him to favour. Yet, I suspect, not without serious repugnance and misgivings, and a resolution to keep a tight hand over him, to trust him as little as was compatible with professed friendliness, and to deal summarily with him on the first symptoms of a relapse.

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On the other hand, Sivaji, I believe, was only acting a part, which he meant to make subservient to a very different one, when it should suit him to throw off the mask. He had conceived high hopes of promotion in the Imperial service, from Jei Sing's representations. To ingratiate himself with Aurungzib; to distinguish himself, as he had done at Bijapur, in active service, in a command for which he had proved his competence; to acquire influence, and wield resources, which he might insidiously and abruptly divert to his own purposes, and employ *against* his employer: would be quite in accordance with his profound subtlety, his unscrupulousness, his personal ambition, and his national aspirations—in short, with the whole bent of his peculiar genius. And such, I believe, was his calculation.

But at Delhi his sanguine hopes were promptly dashed. He had counted without his host, or rather, as so often happens when match-makers and peace-makers interpose their well-intentioned offices, the extent of the Emperor's placability and readiness to employ him had been exaggerated. At the opening of the negotiations, Jei Sing had assured him that he would receive a *high munsub*—or honorary military command. And in subsequent private conferences he had gone much further, and induced Sivaji to assume that he would be placed in a position favourable for the further-

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ance of his ulterior, though carefully concealed, purpose. But when Jei Sing reported the progress of the negotiation to the Emperor, he was less explicit; for he did not venture to prescribe any specific mode of treatment for completing the cure of the convalescent political patient. Or, as Khafi Khan puts it: "Raja Jei Sing had flattered Sivaji with promises; but as the Raja knew the Emperor to have a strong feeling against Sivaji, he artfully refrained from making known the promises he had held out." *Hinc illæ lachrymæ!* Sivaji's annoyance, disappointment, and complaints, which are recorded by the historian, and the consequences of which were so eventful in the sequel, were the natural results of this double-dealing, though neither Ram Sing, Jei Sing's son, to whom they were confided, nor the historian himself, seems to have understood their deepest ground. Khafi Khan implies that Sivaji took offence at the *mere* circumstance that the *munsub* granted to him was not high enough, but only the same as was bestowed on his young son and on one of his relatives, who had done good service in the late campaign against Bijapur, namely, that of a *panj-hazari*, or nominal commander of five thousand men, instead of a *haft-hazari*, or commander of seven thousand. This was no doubt a grievance, capable of being avowed as a breach of a specific assurance at the opening of the negotiations,

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and as placing Sivaji on the same level as his boy and his follower. But this was not the root of the bitterness of spirit which he exhibited. He was not a man to resent wrathfully the mere fact that, so to speak, he had been made a C.B. instead of a K.C.B. Manucci says that he took offence at being ranged at Court in a low station, and openly expressed his disgust and resentment. Hence a second question occurs to which what I have already said will supply what I believe to be the most probable answer. Why was he so seriously perturbed and so bitterly disappointed? Was it not because he realised that he was checked, if not checkmated, in his deep, secret game? Because he had too good reason to suspect that Aurungzib was resolved to give him no opportunity of playing it, and, whether the arch-dissembler saw through him or not, judged that he himself had done enough by putting him off with a second-rate honorary decoration, and had no intention of employing him in such a position as was indispensable for his ulterior purpose?

To Ram Sing he complained that he had not been properly treated, instancing, in particular, the minor honorary distinction. The Emperor was informed of what is called "his disrespectful bearing"; whereupon "he was dismissed with little ceremony, forbidden to reappear at Court, relegated to a house in

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the suburbs, and orders were given to the *kotwal* (*i.e.* the chief of the police) to place guards round it."

A third question here presents itself: What were the Emperor's real intentions with regard to him at this moment?

There can be no doubt that he was much scandalised and very indignant at Sivaji's presumption, and testified his high displeasure by banishing him from the Court, and secluding him in his house. But was this all?

The placing of a guard round his quarters looks equivocal and sinister.

Had not the so-called "disrespectful bearing" of Sivaji struck Aurungzib as symptomatic of the spirit of self-assertion and latent disaffection which he had never ceased to fear, might still lurk in the breast of the wily though hitherto obsequious suppliant for his favour? And if so, might he not be considering the expediency of ridding himself of all danger from such a quarter by putting Sivaji to death, or immuring him, as he did so many other dangerous political personages, in Gwalior? This seems to me by no means improbable.

If I have been rather lengthy in endeavouring to thread the maze of this encounter of wit between these consummately artful rivals, my apology must be that the fate of the Empire hung on the issue.

Bold as he was, Sivaji realised the imminence

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of his peril, and with his characteristic ingenuity extricated himself from it. Affecting severe illness, he presently announced his recovery, and in gratitude for it distributed copious alms to Brahmins, fakirs, and others; especially of sweetmeats, which were sent out in large covered baskets. He also sent, as presents to Brahmins, some horses, which were stationed at an appointed place some miles towards Muttra. A devoted follower took his place on his couch, with a veil over his face, and Sivaji's ring prominently displayed on his hand, and affected sleep when visited. Sivaji and his son passed out of the city, concealed in the baskets, reached the horses, and with a large body of attendants galloped hard to Muttra. Three alarms meanwhile of his suspected escape had been given; but not until the third did an exact inspection detect the false convalescent. Then active pursuit began, but was baffled by Sivaji's arts and rapid movement. He and his friends disguised themselves as mendicants, and hurried forward on foot, until they were apprehended on suspicion by an officer at an unnamed place. But Sivaji, taking the bull by the horns, avowed his identity, but by a bribe of two valuable jewels procured his own liberation and that of his companions. Their headlong flight after escaping this danger proved too much for the boy Sambaji; and he was left at Benares in the charge of a Brahmin,

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who, after his accession to the Rajaship, became his Sejanus, and his associate in death.

The fugitives hastened through Behar by Patna and Chanda, and, traversing a thickly wooded country, diverged southwards, and gained the Court of the King of Golconda. Proscribed anew by the Emperor, Sivaji had nothing to hope from his original sovereign, the King of Bijapur. But his fame, and his solemn promises to help his present host, the Golconda King, to recover territory that had been wrested from him by his and Sivaji's common enemies, procured him the aid of a military force, the nucleus of a new army, which was rapidly increased by the contingents of his own people.

His progress thenceforth was startlingly rapid. The hostile but candid Mussulman historian says: "By fraud and stratagem, and by his marvellous skill in the conduct of sieges, every fort that he approached fell into his hands." He contrived, by ingenious excuses, to evade the delivery of most of these places to the King of Golconda's officers, and retained possession of them. Not less vigorous and successful were his operations in his own Western country. Satara, Parnala, Rajgarh, and at last almost all that he had surrendered were recovered.

And he recommenced his defiant campaign in the lower country by a rapid and most

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lucrative raid on Surat, where, however, the English factory stoutly and successfully resisted him. He captured also some ten thousand horses, and organised a cavalry force of *bargeers*, that is, soldiers more immediately dependent on him, as opposed to what we should call irregular horse, who provided their own steeds and equipments. Moreover, he rebuilt the forts on the shore near Surat, which had been destroyed, constructed a fleet, and preyed upon the shipping of that flourishing port.

At Rajgarh he constructed a stronger fortress than any of those hitherto in his dominions, and took every precaution to make it impregnable. There he fixed his abode, formally assumed the throne, devised wise regulations for the conduct of his civil government, and the organisation of his increasing and powerful army. There he defied his Imperial adversary; and thence, from time to time, he emerged, to plunder the country from Guzerat to the Coromandel coast; to levy *chout*, a commutation of 25 per cent. of the land revenue, in lieu of plunder; to baffle, and at times defeat, the Imperial armies; and to approve himself an irrepressible antagonist of the Great Mogul, an heroic champion of Mahratta independence, and an unrivalled master of guerilla and predatory warfare.

I need not relate his after-career. For I hope I have sufficiently illustrated the nature

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of the man and of his power, and the formidableness of the problem which he had propounded for solution to the haughty, tyrannical, and aggressive Emperor. He died in 1680.

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VI

THE REIMPOSITION OF THE *JIZYA*, AND THE RAJPUT REVOLT

THE sudden death of Sivaji suspended for a short time the contest in the Dekkan. But Aurungzib's policy had meanwhile produced a dangerous crisis in Hindostan. I need not particularise his earlier measures, which were calculated to annoy, depress, and estrange his Hindoo subjects, but were endured without positive resistance. But the reimposition of the *jizya* was felt to be at once an intolerable grievance, and a gross insult to the higher and more influential classes, and it no doubt predisposed the Rajputs to engage in the rising which the Emperor immediately provoked by his arbitrary and suspicious treatment of the family of one of their deceased Princes.

The odiousness, the injustice, and the impolicy of the *jizya* are forcibly urged in the remarkable letter, of uncertain authorship, said to have been addressed to Aurungzib, and translated in Orme's *Fragments of the Mogul Empire*. To its account of the disastrous results of the measure I shall refer later. But I will

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quote now what are evidently the genuine impressions of a thoughtful Hindoo on the injustice of this invidious mark of distinction, urged on comprehensive *religious* grounds, thus (so to speak) turning the tables on the bigoted Emperor, and pointing out to him a more excellent way than he had adopted, of pleasing and conforming to the will of the Deity.

"If your majesty," he says, "places any faith in those books, by distinction called divine, you will there be instructed that God is the God of all mankind, not the God of Mahomedans alone. The Pagan and the Mussulman are equally in his presence. Distinctions of colour are of his ordination. It is he who gives existence. In your temples, to his name the voice is raised in prayer; in a house of images, where the bell is shaken, still he is the object of adoration." This would, perhaps, be news to Aurungzib, who, in his abhorrence of the popular polytheism, would fail to discern, and be equally unwilling to acknowledge, that the more enlightened spirits then, as now, through the veil of image-worship, recognised and adored τὸ θεῖον — practically — the Supreme Being in the unity of His primordial essence, whence subordinate deities are (in Gnostic phrase) emanations. "To vilify the religion or customs of other men, is to set at naught the pleasure of the Almighty. When we deface a picture we naturally incur the resentment of the painter;

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and justly has the poet said, 'Presume not to arraign or scrutinise the various works of power divine.'" Having thus combated the bigot on his own ground—religious obligation, the writer sums up shortly and tellingly the case against the imposition :—

"In fine," he says, "the tribute you demand from the Hindoo is repugnant to justice: it is equally foreign from good policy, as it must impoverish the country: moreover, it is an innovation, and *an infringement of the laws of Hindostan*" (pp. 254–255).

The passionate animosity excited by the tax was displayed in various ways, and on very different scenes. At Delhi itself a great multitude assembled in front of the palace, and petitioned the Emperor to recall the obnoxious edict. "But," says the historian, "he would not listen to their complaints." On his way to pay his devotions in the mosque he was obstructed by a still vaster assemblage of importunate petitioners, and was unable to proceed. In vain he gave orders to force a way through. "At length," continues Khafi Khan, "an order was given to bring out the elephants and direct them against the mob. Many fell trodden to death under the feet of the elephants and horses. For some days the Hindus continued to assemble in great numbers and complain, but at length they submitted to pay the *jizya*" (p. 296). Elsewhere the protest took a more violent

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and menacing form. Burhanpur was one of the most important cities in the Dekkan, the capital of the Mogul Province of Khandeish. And there resistance showed itself in a doubly ominous manner. First, in Khafi Khan's words: "The infidel inhabitants of the city and the country round made great opposition to the payment of the *jizya*. There was not a district where the people, with the help of the *faujdars* and *mukaddams*, did not make disturbances and resistance" (p. 310). That the Imperial officials should connive at and abet the rebellious movement was the strongest token of the inexpediency of the measure, and of the danger of overstraining the administrative machinery, lest it should, in the end, break down altogether. Another fact, mentioned by Khafi Khan, is of similar import. Kakar Khan, as I shall notice immediately, was the first Collector of the *jizya*. He was succeeded by a zealous officer, Mir Abdul Karim. But on Aurungzib's arrival he requested to be allowed to resign his office, "and that the collection of the *jizya* might be deputed to some one else." This plainly indicates that even the Emperor's higher and most active Mahometan ministers misliked the invidious task, and discharged it reluctantly. But another equally dangerous circumstance occurred on this occasion. The two streams of disaffection and resistance to Aurungzib's authority now began to mingle. Sivaji was dead, and had been

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succeeded by his son Sambaji. His earliest exploit was, at the head of twenty thousand men, to co-operate with the malcontents by a sudden dash at Kakar Khan, the collector of the *jizya*, who fled before him into Bahadapur, a town in the immediate vicinity of Burhanpur, and there held out against his assailants, and repulsed several attempts to carry the fort by assault. Baffled in this, the Mahrattas raided severely the town and its district around, and returned home with an immense booty.

After what I have previously said, I need not describe the feelings of the Rajputs, and especially of their Princes, on the imposition of the *jizya*. But it is worth while to mention that the Rana of Oudipur, even while preparing to resort to arms, and casting dust in the interval in the Emperor's eyes by negotiation, scorned even to affect literal compliance, but proposed to commute the tax by a territorial cession.

Thus Aurungzib had abundant warning that he was playing a dangerous game, and that any new provocation to the proud Rajput temper would be extremely likely to bring matters to extremities, and to produce the explosion that had been long pending. Yet he chose this peculiarly inopportune time to act in a manner specially calculated to exasperate the Rajputs, and arouse the martial spirit of that gallant people against him.

The Rajput Principalities were not regularly

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incorporated with the Empire. Their chieftains paid tribute, and supplied their contingents to the Imperial armies; but otherwise home rule prevailed in their dominions. Jeswunt Sing was the Raja of Joudpur, and had long played a prominent and versatile part in Imperial politics. He had been a staunch partisan of Dara against Aurungzib. But on Dara's, or rather his own, defeat, he had, apparently in despair, and worked upon by Aurungzib's arts, acquiesced in his success, and joined him. But in the renewed contest with Shuja he seems to have discerned another chance of averting what threatened to be a very unwelcome and uncongenial régime; and in the crisis of the war he suddenly changed sides once more, and made a treacherous night attack on Aurungzib's camp, which, but for the presence of mind and energetic exertions of Aurungzib himself, might have proved fatal to him. Nevertheless, he and Jeswunt were afterwards reconciled; and though no doubt mutually distrustful, remained ostensibly on good terms throughout Jeswunt's life. But the Emperor suspected the Raja of remissness in the Mahratta war, if not of actual collusion with Sivaji; and had also a standing grievance against him respecting his tribute, the particulars of which are not explained. Still he did not find it convenient to break with him. He was too powerful, and had too much influence with other important persons. Hence he continued

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to be employed in military commands, though the Emperor's distrust and want of cordiality to him seem to have been no secret among the Rajputs.

Aurungzib had unwisely provoked a contest with the unsubdued Afghans, and Jeswunt Sing had been sent against them. While engaged on this service he died; and his family returned home, without awaiting regular Imperial passes from Delhi. They were stopped at the Indus, but forced their way onwards; and the Emperor, apparently availing himself of this irregularity, made an insidious attempt to arrest them, and get them into his own custody. The circumstances are not fully explained; but the case seems pretty clear, when the past relations of the parties and the character of the Emperor are taken into consideration. Aurungzib probably intended to dictate his own terms about the tribute before releasing them, rather than to visit upon them his ill-feeling towards Jeswunt. But he was suspected of darker designs, and Rajput pride was offended, and indignation excited, by the travellers' camp being surrounded and closely invested by an Imperial force. The Ranis, that is, the widows of Jeswunt, and his two young sons were escorted by a large company of their warlike attendants, commanded by a gallant officer, Durga Das. By his contrivance the whole family made their escape, and were conveyed to Joudpur. It had been

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necessary to substitute other ladies and boys in the place of the fugitives. These were arrested; and the Emperor sought to make the best of the situation by recognising and treating the captive youths as Jeswunt's actual sons. But the truth could not be long concealed; and Ajit Sing, the elder son, lived to become a formidable thorn in the side of the Empire.

Thus what I called the smouldering fire of disaffection, which Aurungzib's attitude and conduct had kindled at the opening of his reign, and which his many acts of intolerance had tended to intensify, and his recent imposition of the *jizya* to fan into a flame, burst out at last in determined rebellion and desperate war.

Of the three chief Rajput States, Jeipur was too near to Delhi, and too closely connected with the Imperial family, to take part in the insurrection. Jeswunt's principality, Joudpur, was more remote, on the west of the Aravulli range of mountains; and there a large army soon assembled, under Durga Das, who had rescued the young Princes. Aurungzib in person advanced against it, and called upon the Rana of Oudipur, whose territories lay along the south-eastern slopes of the Aravulli, to submit to the *jizya*, and to seize and bring to the presence the runaway boys. This was perhaps to test his disposition. The Rana disclaimed all complicity with the rising, and, as I have men-

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tioned, proposed to cede territory in lieu of paying the invidious tax. This seems to have reassured the Emperor, and he returned to Delhi, leaving the conduct of the war, and the completion of the negotiation with the Rana of Oudipur, to a lieutenant.

But it soon appeared that the Rana had thrown in his lot with the insurgents. And the Emperor, now realising the seriousness of the crisis, made great and comprehensive preparations for meeting it. He marched in person to Ajmir, as a central position in the theatre of the coming war; summoned in haste his sons, Moazzam from the Dekkan, and Azam from Bengal, at the head of their respective armies; and ordered the Subahdar of Guzerat to station himself between Rajputana and Ahmedabad, to cut off communication between the rebels and the Mahrattas, while Prince Akbar was detached to attack Oudipur. "When," says the native historian, "the Rana heard of these preparations, he laid Udipur, his capital, waste, and, with the treasure and family and followers of himself and Jeswunt Sing, he fled to the mountains and difficult passes" (p. 299). The Prince was ordered to pursue him with an expeditious mountain corps, and on the prompt arrival of his brothers, they were similarly employed; and explicit instructions were issued to wage the war in the most merciless and destructive manner. They complied readily, and besides slaughtering the

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men wholesale, as *per* orders, "employed themselves in laying waste the country, destroying temples and buildings, cutting down fruit trees, and making prisoners of the women and children of the infidels who had taken refuge in holes and ruined places." The Rajputs retaliated in true Highland style. More than twenty-five thousand assailed the Imperial troops, and cut off their supplies. "They allured several thousand of the royal forces into the heart of the Rana's fastnesses. There they attacked them, and killed many, both horse and foot."

"The Rajputs held all the roads through the hills, and came down occasionally from the hills, and attacked the Prince's forces by surprise."

I have quoted these passages not only as giving local colour to the course of the contest, but because they prefigure clearly the character of the previous and later Mahratta warfare in the Ghat region, and in combination with Sivaji's fort system and Mahratta "slimness" illustrate the geographical causes of Aurungzib's final collapse.

Thus the savage struggle went on. But it assumed a new character when the skeleton in Aurungzib's closet stepped forth, and the political parricide, and murderer of his philo-Rajput brother, was threatened with retribution in kind.

With professed desire of a reconciliation, the Rajputs made overtures to Prince Moazzam, requesting him to intercede for them with the

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Emperor. But this was only a veil for a deeper design—to win him over to their cause by the promise of assisting him to supplant his father, who was notoriously suspicious and jealous of him. The Prince, under his mother's influence, turned a deaf ear to the proposal. But the tempters found a more pliant instrument in Prince Akbar, the youngest son, who was dazzled by the prospect, and joined the rebels. Moazzam sent a timely warning to his father, but was not believed, and was sternly admonished to look to his own steps. Suddenly it was announced that Akbar had assumed the throne, appointed his chief officers to high places, and was marching, at the head of seventy thousand men, against his father. Aurungzib had detached almost all his army, and had only a few hundreds of men with him. He sent instantly for Moazzam, who joined him, by a forced march, with ten thousand soldiers. But the Emperor's confidence was thoroughly shaken, and he was in a great strait of misgivings on all sides. He feared Moazzam as much as Akbar; and actually turned his guns against the reinforcement. Moazzam, however, obeyed the paternal injunction to leave his army, and to come to him in all speed with his two sons; and the Emperor's suspicion was thus dispelled—for the time.

Meanwhile, Akbar showed himself quite unequal to the great game he had aspired to play. He did not advance promptly. And Aurungzib

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had time, by his skilful emissaries, to detach some of the rebellious Prince's Mogul supporters, and to sow dissension and mutual distrust among the insurgents. Whether he employed the common device of an intercepted letter to Akbar, assuming that father and son understood each other, and that Akbar was to betray his allies, is not certain, though it was currently reported, and is quite in accordance with the Emperor's style. But from what happened later at the Court of Sambaji I am inclined to think that the young and foolish Prince gave himself airs intolerable to his proud confederates; and that, as his Imperial contingent melted away, they became less and less inclined to back his pretensions. At last, without a battle, he left them, made his way into the Dekkan, was well received by Sambaji; but proved too overbearing, and lost heart. He escaped to Persia, was sheltered by the Shah, and lived and died there, having frequently, but vainly, solicited the help of a military force to prosecute a renewed attempt on the throne of the Great Mogul.

Thus the Emperor was delivered from his great immediate peril; but the Rajput war continued, and though he ceased to take part in it, tormented and weakened him to the end of his reign. And in the long course of warfare upon which he was about to engage in the Dekkan, the names of Rajput commanders are conspicuous by their absence.

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VII

AURUNGZIB'S CONQUESTS IN THE DEKKAN

SEVERAL considerations now determined the Emperor to undertake the personal conduct of the war in the Dekkan.

The objects of the war were two: to extend the limits of the Empire by the subversion of the two remaining Afghan monarchies, Bijapur and Golconda, and the annexation of their dominions; and to suppress the Mahratta polity, and predatory power.

To pursue simultaneously both these objects was characteristic of Aurungzib's want of political insight and military judgment. He had already experienced the difficulty of effecting the second object. And the conquest of the Afghan monarchies, however practicable, and in accordance with the previous forward policy of the Empire, would be untimely and mischievous, while the Mahrattas continued unsubdued. For it would entail new and serious administrative obligations, and a severe strain on a system which was already exhibiting signs of weakness and inefficiency. And it would,

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moreover, tend to disorganise society in the newly conquered territories; to throw out of employment numbers who had clustered around the Court, or served in the armies of the conquered sovereigns; and tempt them and others who were indisposed to acquiesce in Aurungzib's régime to escape it, and continue their resistance to it by joining the Mahrattas. Thus the achievement of the one object would but increase the difficulties, otherwise great enough and to spare, of accomplishing the other. But, in this, as in other cases, Aurungzib, obstinate by nature, unteachable by experience, and blinded by the passions, on the one hand, of ambition, on the other of vindictiveness, addressed himself to this double enterprise as unwisely as Charles the Bold went to war with the Swiss, and with not dissimilar results.

From his own point of view, however, circumstances seemed to promise success to his twofold aim, and to make his presence on the scene, and his personal conduct of the war, desirable. The kingdoms of Bijapur and Golconda appeared quite incapable of withstanding the great army which he intended to lead against them. Their comparative weakness was indicated by the fact that they had already virtually acknowledged the supremacy of the Empire. According to a practice, not infrequent in India, when hard pressed, they had, from time to time, paid tribute to it. The case

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appears to have been somewhat analogous to the relations of England to the Papacy, after John's ignominious stipulation with Innocent III. The thousand marks which, according to that arrangement, were due annually to the Holy See, were paid intermittently until Edward III. repudiated the humiliating compact. And the Mogul arms had long seriously threatened, and gained occasional advantages over these isolated and mutually jealous, and therefore still weaker, monarchies. And if the Emperor's denunciating declaration of war against Golconda was sincere, he believed that its luxurious and corrupt condition would make it an easy prey—an assumption belied by its stout and prolonged defence. But, moreover, it was not to his arms alone that he looked for victory. He relied much on his insidious practices of intrigue and corruption, and on the dazzling prospect which he could hold out to traitors of favour and exaltation in his own service. Thus he thought that to complete the work which he had begun as Prince would be both appropriate and easy.

Moreover, he had special *gravamina* against the King of Golconda. While he was intent on depressing the Hindoos in the Empire, and stamping out the Mahratta uprising in the Dekkan, the King of Golconda was said to give the chief place in his favour and counsels to two Hindoos. This was, of course, Nehushtan

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to Aurungzib. And the re-establishment and consolidation of Sivaji's power had been effected through the aid of the same Sovereign, though the upstart adventurer had been placed under the ban of the Empire. Such facts alone would amply account for Aurungzib's resolve to conquer such an offensive potentate, and to annex his dominions.

The Emperor was, I believe, the more inclined to wage war against the Afghan kings for the very reasons that would have made a more far-sighted statesman hesitate to engage in it. The Rajput revolt showed that he could no longer command the combined forces of the hitherto united Empire, and this example of armed resistance might be followed elsewhere, and both diminish and divert to the new scenes of disturbance the military strength of his distracted dominions. But he had been not only endangered, but humiliated in Rajputana; his prestige as a great general had suffered eclipse, and his Imperial dignity had been grossly affronted and impaired. And I believe that he was anxious to recover his ground, and to restore his reputation, by a striking military triumph, and the extension of the Empire by the annexation of two new provinces.

As to the Mahrattas, he not only affected, but, I believe, really felt, in spite of Sivaji's exploits, supreme contempt for them. In his

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eyes they were merely a barbarous community of active, adroit, and greedy brigands, who had been formidable to society so long as they were animated and managed by a man of such exceptional ability as Sivaji; but who, having lost their leader, would, if they did not disperse, probably fall out among themselves, betray each other, and be easily circumvented by his combined arms, subtle intrigues, and appeals to their cupidity. But he was totally unable to appreciate their higher moral characteristics; the resolute passion for national independence which their leader had kindled in their bosoms; their abhorrence of his new version of the obligations of a Mahometan sovereign towards men of their own religion; their intense devotion to the memory, the example, and the institutions of their heroic and indomitable chief; and the confidence which he had imparted to them that the Imperial power, so far from being irresistible, was extremely vulnerable, and if persistently assailed, on his method, might be brought low in the end.

Thus grievously underestimating the moral strength of this bandit confederacy, Aurungzib prepared to confront it, with an undiscerning arrogance, and fixed idea of subduing and tyrannising over it, similar to those of Philip II. towards the Dutch "sea-beggars"; and, as I said of Charles the Bold, with not dissimilar results.

Khafi Khan attributes the Emperor's under-

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taking the personal superintendence of the war to the insolence of Sambaji in venturing to raid almost up to the gates of Burhanpur. There is a germ of truth in this statement. But I think it would be more exact to say that Aurungzib's mistrust of the fidelity of his deputy, Khan Jehan, as well as of his son, Prince Moazzam, besides the other reasons that I have mentioned, weighed with him in this decision. And as Burhanpur and its vicinity had been the focus of the anti-*jizya* movement, and this had been fomented and assisted by Sambaji's incursion, to make Burhanpur his headquarters was an obviously expedient plan. There, accordingly, he assembled a mighty host, and established a splendid and imposing Court (1683).

The first operations against the Mahrattas were confided to Prince Moazzam. He was to invade the rugged, intricate, and wooded region of the Concan, the western declivities of the mighty Ghats; to "capture the forts, and punish the infidels." Such was his commission. But to execute it was not so easy as the Emperor chose to assume. The difficulties of Mahratta warfare, and the geographical advantages of the Mahratta base, at once became evident, and the collapse of this expedition foreshadowed the fate of Aurungzib's general undertaking. Some passages of the hostile but truthful historian's narrative will best describe the result (pp. 314–315).

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"On the march through the narrow passes there were many sharp fights with the enemy, in which numbers of the royal soldiers fell. . . . The air of the place did not suit the invaders. The enemy swarmed around on every side, and cut off the supplies. . . . The enemy cut down the grass, which was a cause of great distress to man and beast, and they had no food but cocoa-nuts, and the grain called *kudun*, which acted like poison upon them. Great numbers of men and horses died. Grain was scarce and dear. . . . Those men who escaped death dragged on a half-existence, and with crying and groaning felt as if every breath they drew was their last. There was not a noble who had a horse in his stable fit for use."

He then explains that the Emperor, to relieve the army from starvation, ordered his officials at Surat to send ample supplies of grain to it by sea. But he continues: "As the ships had to pass by their newly erected fortresses, [the enemy] stopped them on their way, and took most of them." And he concludes this lugubrious account thus: "The order at length came for the retreat of the army, and it fell back *fighting all the way* to Ahmadnagar, where Aurungzib then was."

Such was the significant prelude to the great tragedy that was to follow! Yet the Emperor's calculation, that the death of Sivaji had removed the chief obstacle to his success, would have

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been still more confident had he understood better than he appears to have done, the character of his successor. For Sambaji, the new Raja, was a complete contrast to his father. Sivaji's versatile genius, amazing energy, sleepless vigilance, and lively sympathy with his followers had given him a commanding ascendancy over them; had enabled him to maintain strict discipline in his army, an admirable organisation of his fort system, and appropriate regulations for the conduct of his civil government—in short, to transmute a band of brigands into an effective and formidable antagonist of the Imperial power. But Sambaji was utterly destitute of his great qualities, insensible to the requirements of his position; reckless, self-indulgent, and disposed to be tyrannical; and shamelessly and perilously subservient to the influence of an evil-minded favourite, the Brahmin Kaloosha, who had taken charge of him when his father was obliged to leave the boy behind in the course of his precipitate flight from Delhi. Such a régime threatened the speedy undoing of Sivaji's work, and the renewed triumph of the Crescent over militant Hindooism. *Sed dîs aliter visum*, as will soon appear.

I will, however, first dispose of the Emperor's transactions with the Afghan monarchies. He first assailed that of Golconda. The immediate conduct of the operations was entrusted to

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Prince Moazzam *and* Khan Jehan. They gained victories; but, as the Emperor thought, neglected to push their advantage, and he sharply reprimanded them. Still the Prince showed no great alacrity to fight a general battle, but sent a chivalrous challenge to engage with two or three on each side, which came to nothing. At last the desertion of one of his chief generals so much alarmed the King, that he fled into the strong fortress of Golconda, leaving his capital, the adjacent city of Hyderabad, in a state of wild panic, which was quickly justified by a rising of the lawless classes, and a horrible scene of indiscriminate cruelty and looting. But matters became still worse when the Imperial army attacked and forced its way into the city, and the soldiers, in spite of the efforts of the Prince to restrain them, emulated the worst actions of the insurgent *budmashes*.

Meanwhile Prince Moazzam made a convention with the Sovereign, which saved his kingdom for the time, and was grudgingly acquiesced in by the Emperor. War was then resumed with Bijapur, and, after a tedious siege, in which the assailants suffered much, the capital was surrendered; the Sovereign was sent to Dowlatabad, pensioned, and imprisoned; and his dominions were reduced to a Mogul province (1686). In the course of the siege the Emperor had conceived new suspicions of the fidelity of Prince Moazzam—now called

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Shah Alam, and had instituted a strict inquiry, without ascertaining any material facts against him. But his distrust remained, and his son experienced the effects of it later. Nor was Aurungzib's uneasy mind better satisfied with his other general, Khan Jehan. "He was," says Khafi Khan, "annoyed with him for not having pursued and secured Prince Akbar when that Prince was near his territory." He seems, in fact, to have been constantly haunted by the fear of a conspiracy to retaliate upon him his unfilial conduct.

The attack on Golconda was now resumed; but Aurungzib made his approach in a characteristically insidious manner. On the pretext of a pilgrimage, he massed his army in the neighbourhood. He then formally demanded payment of the tribute, affecting a friendly tone. But he sent private instructions to his envoy to extort as much money as he could—his diplomacy being reinforced by the proximity of the Imperial forces.

When a large sum had been safely received, the Emperor threw off the mask, denounced the King's conduct in a fierce reply to a humble petition for forgiveness, and marched upon Golconda. Some of the counts of this indictment are significant of Aurungzib's policy, and its tendency to unite Mussulmans and Hindoos against him, *e.g.* the King is accused of "placing the reins of authority and government in the

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hands of vile tyrannical infidels" (this refers to the two Hindoo ministers, Madana and Akana); "making no distinction between infidelity and Islam," and "waging obstinate war in defence of infidels" (this refers to the aid given to Sivaji); and a new grievance of the same kind is now added: "It has lately become known that a lac of pagodas has been sent to the wicked Sambha."

The final defence of the royal fortress was heroic. The place was amply supplied with arms, ammunition, and food. The garrison fought most gallantly and perseveringly; they poured upon the assailants an unceasing fire of artillery and small arms; made bold and frequent sallies, repulsing the besiegers, destroying their works, and disputing every step of their advance. The assailants mined; the assailed countermined, and secretly withdrew or damped the enemies' powder, so that it produced little effect. In other cases the explosion took a wrong direction and overwhelmed the besiegers. "Then," we are told, "great wailing and complaints arose from the troops engaged in the siege." The efforts of the defenders were vigorously seconded by their allies—the Mahrattas:—

"The forces of the hell-dog Sambha had come to the assistance of Haidarabad, and, hovering round the Imperial forces, they cut off the supplies of grain." Famine was the result, and

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its natural consequence, pestilence. An escalade was attempted, but was repulsed. The besiegers and their works suffered much from a heavy rain; and in their disorder were cut up by another sally, and many were made prisoners. Abul Hasan again tried to negotiate. But the Emperor insisted on his surrendering at discretion, and the struggle was renewed. The long delay kindled the anger of Aurungzib. He called together his officers and chiefs, and, placing himself at about a gun-shot distance from the walls, ordered an assault to be made under his eyes. Prodigies of valour are said to have been exhibited by his army. But a storm of wind and rain arose, and obstructed the progress of the assailants; and they were forced to fall back, drenched with the torrent. The garrison made another sally, took possession of the trenches, spiked the heavy guns, on the mounting of which immense sums of money and infinite labour had been expended; and carried away all that was portable. They pulled out of the moat the logs of wood and the many thousands of bags, which had been used to fill it up, and with them repaired the breaches made by the mines. Still the besiegers persevered. "They cast into the ditches thousands of bags filled with dirt and rubbish, and thousands of carcases of animals and men who had perished during the operations. Several times the valour of the assailants carried them

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to the top of the walls; but the watchfulness of the besieged frustrated their efforts, so they threw away their lives in vain, and the fortress remained untaken."

I have given this rather detailed account of the siege of Golconda because it shows, what the Emperor would not have acknowledged, that if in the comparative integrity of his military power he was so long and completely baffled in his attempts to master a single fortress, the prospect of reducing the long line of fastnesses that studded the crests of a region most unfavourable to his operations, and exhausting to his soldiers, was not a hopeful one.

Already, in the lower country, the troops began to murmur, and many, we are told, actually deserted. But, as I have already said, the Emperor did not rely on arms alone. While his inflexible determination told upon the defenders, he was busily engaged in playing upon their fears and their hopes, and thus seducing them from their allegiance to a falling cause. Thus, by degrees, he won over many, whom he received gladly into his service. But there was one notable contrast to these traitors. Abdur Razzak, when the place was at last betrayed, and the gates opened, is said to have received more than seventy wounds in a last desperate attempt to oppose the entrance of the enemy. The Emperor, whether from genuine admiration, or desirous to attach to himself so

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valiant and steadfast a man, sent two surgeons, a European and a Hindoo, to attend him, and said that "if Abul Hasan had possessed one more servant devoted like Abdur Razzak, it would have taken much longer to subdue the fortress." The hero did recover, and after an interval did enter the Imperial service. The conquered King behaved with great dignity. He was courteously received, and pensioned; but consigned, like his Bijapur compeer, to the strong fortress of Dowlatabad. And his dominions became, as in the other case, an Imperial province (1687); destined, however, to be soon again virtually detached, and appropriated by Nizam-ul-Mulk.

As I intimated above, pestilence had already assailed the Imperial army. This, owing, no doubt, to the disturbed state of the country and the consequent scarcity, now spread over the Dekkan, where it seems to have been closely conterminous with the theatre of war; and it lasted eight years (1683–1691). The Imperial army suffered severely from it; the mortality was enormous, and numberless victims lay uncared for and unburied.

The Emperor, now free to devote his whole attention to the Mahrattas, conceived new hopes of success from a remarkable achievement, the kidnapping of their new Raja. His best policy would probably have been to leave Sambaji, for the time, severely alone, as an objective;

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to repel Mahratta raids; but to trust to the internal dissensions of his enemies, provoked by Sambaji's character and the ascendancy of Kaloosha, whom he had made his minister; and to have fomented the strife by his intrigues and bribery. But an enterprising officer proposed a *coup de main*, which was approved, and was successful in its immediate object.

The Raja and his favourite, instead of attending to the business of government, had retired to a secluded glen, and, in fancied security, devoted themselves to untimely and questionable enjoyments. Mukarrab Khan, an old servant of the Golconda King, made a sudden dash into the mountain region, and surprised and captured the Raja, his young son, and his minister, and conveyed them all to the Emperor's head-quarters. When they were brought into his presence, Aurungzib descended from his throne, and thrice made solemn obeisance to Heaven, in thankful recognition of the favour vouchsafed him. This the fettered minister flippantly interpreted to his master as an involuntary homage to the majesty of the Raja. And, desperate of obtaining mercy, both vied in scurrilous abuse of the Emperor and his religon. He was urged to spare them, not in clemency, but from policy, that is, on condition of Sambaji's surrendering his forts. But Aurungzib preferred to inflict signal and exceptional vengeance upon them for their personal outrage on himself, and their

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blasphemies against his religion. But in putting them to death he also had a politic object, in which, as so often, he quite miscalculated. "The Emperor," says Khafi Khan, "was in favour of seizing the opportunity of getting rid of these prime movers of the strife, and hoped that with a little exertion their fortresses would be reduced" (1689). Accordingly, "their tongues were cut out, their eyes torn out, and they were put to death with a variety of tortures." "Such," concludes the historian, "is the retribution for rebellious, violent, oppressive evil-doers" (p. 341). The one-sided naïveté of this sententious moral is rather amusing. But another observation of the same writer is more to the point. "It was," he says, "the will of God that the stock of this turbulent family should not be rooted out of the Dakhin, and that King Aurungzeb should spend the rest of his life in the work of repressing them and taking their fortresses."

Whether, degenerate as he was, Sambaji would have consented to save his life on the proposed condition, had the Emperor been persuaded to forego his cruel vengeance, and simply imprison him, may be doubted. But that Aurungzib thus deliberately preferred a brutal revenge to a possible chance of mastering the Mahratta base, is clear.

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VIII

THE MAHRATTA WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

THE Emperor counted the more on the effect of Sambaji's removal, inasmuch as he had in his hands his victim's young son and titular successor in the Rajaship, who might prove a useful hostage, and facilitate the submission of the acephalous bandits. But once more his statecraft was at fault, from his inability to realise the situation, the disposition and sentiments, the inflexible resolution, the versatile military ability, of his despised enemies, and the immense advantage which nature and art had together conferred upon them in their mountain base.

Moreover, the circumstances of Sambaji's death intensified the spirit of resistance. In his last hours he had in Mahratta estimation done much to redeem his personal vices and his political imbecility. He had died in the assertion of his religion and the denunciation of the False Prophet, and might be regarded as a martyr to Hindooism; and his blood, as usual, was the seed of what I may venture to

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call, by analogy, his Church. Thus love of plunder and warlike enterprise, a sense of growing influence and power in the lowlands, attachment to their familiar and well-guarded mountain haunts, a passionate spirit of independence, and last, but not least, zeal for their own religion and profound animosity to Aurungzib's cold-blooded and cruel persecution of its professors, combined to sustain their resistance, and completely baffle the Emperor's calculations.

Aurungzib now advanced to the vicinity of Bijapur, and there encamped, to be at hand for the contemplated attack on the Mahratta country. But there he learned that, so far from yielding, the enemy were preparing to take the offensive. Sambaji's brother, Ram Raja, had assumed the regency, pending his nephew's captivity. Large forces were mustering in the hills, and were to be employed in invading the lowlands and assailing such mountain fastnesses as had been reduced by the Moguls. Parnala was thus retaken, with much less difficulty than had been experienced in mastering it. Indeed, already Imperial officers began to quail before the Mahratta onslaught. Thus Rajgurh was now tamely surrendered on capitulation by its Mogul commandant, though a force was hastening to its relief. And, in breach of the terms, he was despoiled, and sneaked into headquarters at night in a pitiable condition. Elsewhere also, the Hindoo reaction

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was in progress. The Rajputs were not reconciled. And now, between them and the Mahrattas, another Hindoo people, destined to play a considerable part in the final drama of Imperial dissolution—the Jats, were stirring, and had already, near Agra, attacked an Imperial convoy *en route*, and slain the officer in command of it. The Emperor was so indignant at the failure of his Viceroy to keep this people in order, that he removed him, and replaced him by Bidar Bakht, his grandson.

His increasing animosity to the Hindoos was signified by a new edict of social intolerance. No Hindoo was to ride in a *palki*, or on a horse, without special permission. This restriction may, however, have been partly intended to check seditious gatherings.

Meanwhile, the energy and assurance of the new Regent were shown in his marching completely across the peninsula to the relief of Gingee, in the Carnatic Plain (where Sivaji had acquired territory in his later years), which was now besieged by Zulfikar Khan, one of the ablest Imperial generals. Ram Raja was well served in his absence, and the campaign proved most disastrous and dispiriting to the Imperialists. Two gallant and skilful officers, trained by Sivaji, Santaji Ghorepuray and Dhunaji Jadu, distinguished themselves by their activity and boldness, repeatedly defeated the Imperial commanders, thoroughly cowed their

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spirits, frequently captured them, and characteristically released them on the payment of heavy ransom. The candid Mahometan historian makes the fullest admissions on this subject. Thus he says of Santaji :—

"Every one who encountered him was either killed or wounded and made prisoner; or if any one did escape it was with his mere life, with the loss of his army and baggage. Nothing could be done, for wherever the accursed dog went, and threatened an attack, there was no Imperial *amir* bold enough to resist him, and every loss inflicted on their forces made the boldest warriors quake" (p. 347). And he proceeds to exemplify this remarkable testimony by citing the successive overthrow and capture of three officers; the first of whom, he says, "was accounted one of the bravest and most skilful warriors of the Dakhin"; and the second, "the Rustam of the time, and as brave as a lion."

To these exploits in the Dekkan, the same heroic partisan soon added another decisive defeat of the Imperial generals on the distant border of the Carnatic.

Aurungzib's reception of these repeated evil tidings was characteristic. "He was," says Khafi Khan, "greatly distressed, but in public he said that the creature could do nothing, for everything was in the hands of God." Fatalism is a poor consolation to a would-be conqueror, unless he is sure that Providence is on the side

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of the strong battalions, and that those battalions are his own!

For a time the stress of the war centred in the siege of Gingee. This was the place, the capture of which, in the course of one night, established Bussy's reputation in Dupleix's time. But the Imperialists now blockaded it unsuccessfully for several years. They seem to have had no heart or confidence to attempt the Frenchman's bold operation. They did not even completely invest the place. After a while, the blockaders were themselves blockaded; the neighbouring population was hostile to them, and joined the Mahrattas, who (we are told) "surrounded the royal army on all sides, and showed great audacity in cutting off supplies. Sometimes they burst unexpectedly into an entrenchment, doing great damage to the works, and causing great confusion in the besieging force." The garrisons also stoutly defended themselves, being well armed and provisioned; and co-operated zealously with their friends without. But this was not the worst. Internal dissensions sprung up among the besiegers, and reached a very dangerous climax. Zulfikar Khan was the working head of the army, and acted independently of the Emperor's son, Prince Kam Bakhsh, who was also present, and wished his authority to be recognised. Mortified at his subordinate position, he entered into communications with the enemy, and,

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according to Khafi Khan, was actually "on the point of going over to them"! Zulfikar Khan and his supporters, availing themselves of the pretext that they could not take the Emperor's orders, as the Mahrattas had intercepted all communication with him, and that the Prince was meditating treason, took the strong step of placing him in arrest. At this crisis, the redoubtable Santaji arrived on the scene. Whereupon the Imperialists hastily broke up the siege, and retired, skirmishing, into the neighbouring hills.

At length a show was made of resuming the blockade. But this seems to have been a mere feint to cover the fact that a bargain had been struck, and Gingee, like other places later, fell by bribery (1698). This is suavely intimated by Khafi Khan: "According to report, a sum of money reached the enemy, and they evacuated the fortress and retired."

The Emperor's perplexity and mortification on this occasion were extreme. The long duration of the blockade, the frequent reverses of his arms in the prosecution of it, the unsatisfactory mode of its eventual acquisition, the high-handed action of his generals, and the ambiguous conduct and public arraignment and disgrace of his son, affected him greatly. He coldly commended the generals; but he released the Prince, to whom he was much attached, and bore a grudge against his accusers.

Santaji meanwhile was pursuing his brilliant

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and terror-striking career in the Dekkan. His destruction of an Imperial army under Kasim Khan, one of Aurungzib's best generals, was not only so serious a blow, but affords so characteristic an example of Mahratta tactics, that I would fain describe it in detail. But the closing scene will suffice. After being surrounded, and having tried in vain to cut through the swarming and resolute host, the Moguls fought their way to a fort—Danderi. "There," says Khafi Khan, "for a month they were besieged within the four walls, and every day affairs grew worse with them. They were compelled to kill and eat their baggage [horses] and riding horses, which were themselves nearly starved. . . . The stores of grain were exhausted. . . . To escape from starvation many men threw themselves from the walls, and trusted to the enemy's mercy. . . . Reverses, disease, deficiency of water, and want of grain reduced the garrison to the verge of death. Kasim Khan, according to report, in despair poisoned himself" (p. 356).

After his death, the other officers were similarly affected, and ransomed themselves for the large sum of seven lacs of rupees, equivalent to £70,000. Then they were allowed to steal away, each with his horse and the clothes he wore, but not without giving good security for the payment of the ransom. The historian adds: "The Government and personal property lost during this war [*i.e.* Santaji's struggle with

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Kasim] and siege exceeded fifty or sixty lacs of rupees." Hence we may appreciate the ruinous drain on the public and private resources of the Empire caused by the incessant wear and tear of the protracted War of Mahratta Independence.

Himmut Khan and another Imperial general had marched to relieve the blockaded force. But they were lured into an ambush, and cut off by the same gallant and wily leader.

This, however, was Santaji's last achievement. He was unpopular on account of his strict discipline and severe punishments. And he was basely assassinated by some of his own people, apparently with the connivance, if not at the instigation, of his rival, Dhunaji Jadu, who is said to have been actuated by jealousy. Santaji's family long continued estranged from the Mahratta Confederacy, though they continued to harass the Moguls. I may mention incidentally that the Morari Rao, who joined Clive in the defence of Arcot, was a descendant of the murdered Champion of Mahratta Independence.

The Imperialists were overjoyed at the tidings of Santaji's death. But there was no lack of men to take his place and carry on his work. A Sindia now appears on the scene, and a transaction in which he was concerned further illustrates the tendency of the war to impoverish the Empire, enrich the Mahrattas, and establish corrupt relations with them among the Emperor's own generals.

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The Mahratta officer, with eight thousand horse, was raiding in the neighbourhood of Nundarbar, and demanded *chout* from the city. But the inhabitants refused to pay it, and closed their gates, which, we are told "greatly annoyed the Mahrattas." Already they began to consider it a right, and expected compliance. Husain Ali Khan, an Imperial general, ventured to encounter them with an inferior force, and, as usual, was surrounded and worsted. He was wounded and made prisoner, together with all his men and equipage. As usual also, he was held to ransom. But, unable to make up the whole sum, he asked the bankers and merchants to lend him the balance, which they declined to do. Thus he and his captors had each a grievance against the place, and accordingly came to an agreement to avenge themselves, to their common profit. Husain surrendered the city to the Mahrattas, who extorted a vast contribution from the rich men, and, besides foregoing the balance of the ransom, handed over a sum much exceeding it to Husain himself. When Mogul officers, instead of defending, thus took to betraying, their charge, and sharing the spoils of the enemy, the decay of trade, the neglect of industry, and the reinforcement of the Mahrattas by those who objected to be not only unprotected but doubly fleeced, are intelligible.

While thus defeat and humiliation attended the Imperial armies, the open country was

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ravaged, agriculture discouraged, famine and pestilence propagated, the towns insecurely defended, and their inhabitants exposed to arbitrary exactions—the very elements seemed to combine against the Moguls. The royal camp was pitched near the Bhima River. A terrible flood suddenly submerged it, and created a general panic; and the wear and tear, and consequent increasing aversion to the war in the Imperial army, may be understood from what happened on this occasion, which is given only as a sample of a series of similar catastrophes. "The waters," says the historian, "began to overflow at midnight, when all the world was asleep. The floods carried off about ten thousand or twelve thousand men, with the establishments of the King, and the Princes' and the *amirs*' horses, bullocks, and cattle in countless numbers, tents and furniture beyond all count. Great fear fell on all the army."

The Emperor, in spite of his fatalism, appealed to Heaven for deliverance. "The King," continues Khafi Khan, "wrote out prayers with his own hand, and ordered them to be thrown into the water, for the purpose of causing it to subside." But his suppliant charms were as ineffectual to arrest the course of nature as his arms to stem the human tide of war which he had provoked, and which Providence had decreed was to undermine and submerge his Empire.

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IX

AURUNGZIB UNDERTAKES TO MASTER THE MAHRATTA BASE. THE MAHRATTAS RETALIATE BY SETTLING IN THE DEKKAN IMPERIAL PROVINCES

NEARLY forty years had now elapsed since Sivaji had first come into collision with the Moguls, and nearly twenty since, after his death, Aurungzib had undertaken the superintendence of the war in the Dekkan. He had conquered Bijapur and Golconda; he had put Sambaji to death, and still detained his son and heir in mild durance at his military Court. He had, from time to time, gained advantages over the Mahrattas in the field; and by assault, treachery, or bribery, had obtained possession of some of their strongholds. He had, moreover, pushed his operations into the Carnatic Plain, and Gingee, a most important cluster of fortresses (for there were three, on as many contiguous hills) in the centre of the province, was in his hands. The most formidable champion of Mahratta Independence since Sivaji, the redoubted Santaji Ghorepuray, was no more; and the aged Emperor's determination

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to subdue the obstinate rabble of infidels was as inflexible as ever.

Yet he could not but realise that his fixed purpose had hitherto been signally foiled; that matters were growing worse daily; that campaigning in the open country had proved a miserable failure; that there his regular armies were no match for the agile and indefatigable swarms of light horsemen, thoroughly acquainted with the country, and aided by the sympathy and co-operation of its Hindoo inhabitants, as well as of more primitive tribes from the wilder districts on its confines. If the plague was to be stayed, a more drastic remedy must be applied. If the devastating torrent was to be arrested, it must be cut off or dammed up at its source. In plain terms, the plan of the war must be changed. A comprehensive and resolute effort must be made, by concentrating the bulk of the Imperial force in a systematic attack on the enemy's base—the strong and almost impregnable region of the Ghats, to reduce the whole chain of forts in that quarter, and to overpower the Mahrattas in their mountain home. That the experiment, even if feasible, was a desperate one, will appear even from the simile I have used. Most of the Dekkan rivers rise in the Ghats. And were it possible to arrest their flow thence, the Dekkan would be reduced to a desert. But very different was the case with the tide of insurrection that now

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overspread it. That tide was swollen by the forces of local anarchy, which had their source in the heart of the Dekkan itself; and which the reduction of Bijapur and Golconda had liberated and multiplied. A large part of the population, doubly oppressed and suffering from the recently established tyranny of the Mogul Government, and the ravages and claim to *chout* of the Mahrattas, preferred to abandon their homes and join the invaders. Civil society was, in fact, breaking up, and a state of things supervening, analogous to that of Central India, when the studiously non-intervention policy pursued by Wellesley's successors stimulated the mushroom growth of the Pindari bands.

Thus, even had the Mahratta base been effectually mastered, the Dekkan would still have remained unsubdued and unpacified. But, as we shall see, it was *not* mastered, though many forts fell, more with the aid of the golden key than by force of arms.

However, the Emperor set to work in earnest (1698). He rapidly and strongly entrenched his headquarters, and there deposited his family of ladies and their attendants; issued strict orders that his officers should follow his example, and forbade his soldiers to take their wives or children with them. But his orders were very imperfectly obeyed.

Ram Raja, the Mahratta Regent, on the approach of the Imperial army, attempted to

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divert it by making a raid into Berar, in concert with the Raja of Deogarh. This chief had joined the Emperor, and had professed to become a Mussulman; but he now deserted him and fled, renounced Islam, and turned filibuster—a good illustration of the temper of the time among the Hindoos, which was sweeping high and low into the vortex of anarchy. But Aurungzib was not to be diverted from his purpose, and Satara was promptly invested. It made a desperate resistance, and four months were spent in vain efforts to reduce it. "The garrison," says the historian, "rolled down great stones, which . . . crushed many men and animals. The rain obstructed the arrival of corn; the enemy were very daring in attacking the convoys, and the country for twenty *kos* round the fortress had been burnt, so that grain and hay became very scarce and dear." The Moguls, like natives in general, were never expert in siege operations. Akbar himself lay before Chitore, the old capital of Oudipur, for years; and even Hyder Ali was no exception to the statement, though he took many places by treachery and corruption of the commandants. On this occasion the besiegers exploded one mine with good effect, but suffered severely from a second operation of the same kind. Khafi Khan says: "A portion of the rock above was blown up, but . . . it came down on the heads of the besiegers like a mountain of destruction,

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and several thousands were buried under it. . . . The garrison then set about repairing the walls, and they again opened fire, and rolled down the life-destroying stones. When Aurungzib was informed of the disaster, and of the despondency of his men, he . . . mounted his horse, and went to the scene of action, *as if in search of death.*" Such are the significant words of the historian, whose sympathies were strongly against the Mahrattas. And he goes on to describe the passionate but utterly futile attempts of the Emperor to reanimate his drooping soldiers, and induce them to renew the assault. And he concludes: "When he perceived that his words made no impression on the men, he was desirous to lead the way himself,—but the nobles objected to this rash proposition." So despondent and disgusted were the soldiers, that they actually set fire to the besieging works, which (we are told) "had been constructed at great trouble and expense," and which are said to have burned brightly for a week!

But a sudden and unexpected event seemed to have changed the whole situation. Ram Raja, like his father, on his return from his raid in the north, had abruptly expired, leaving only infant sons. His widow, Tara Bai, in turn, assumed the Regency. On these tidings, says Khafi Khan, "the Emperor ordered the drums of rejoicing to be beaten,—and the

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soldiers congratulated each other,—saying that another prime mover in the strife was removed, and that it would not be difficult to overcome two young children and a helpless woman." But never did men miscalculate more. Tara Bai was a woman of remarkable ability, energy, and determination, and in the end proved herself quite equal to the emergency.

But, for the moment, the death of her husband undoubtedly much depressed the Mahrattas, while it reanimated the Moguls. And how much this was the case may be estimated by the extraordinary fact that, after so long and stoutly holding his own, the panic-stricken commandant of Satara not only surrendered the fortress, but actually entered the Imperial service.

But the adjacent fort of Parli held out for six weeks longer, the garrison displaying great valour, and inflicting much loss on the besiegers, who also suffered severely from the weather and the cutting off of their supplies. At last, however, they reduced the place; and this arduous campaign came to an end. Half a year had been spent in achieving a Pyrrhus victory. A few more such, and Aurungzib would be undone.

The circumstances just related will sufficiently illustrate the arduous, tardy, and indecisive character of the Emperor's attempt to conquer the Mahratta base. A detailed narrative of his

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persistent operations during the next four years would be tedious and unprofitable, and would involve the repetition of obstacles, misadventures, and military grievances similar to those already given. I shall, therefore, only notice summarily the general features and abortive result of this last experiment of subjugation.

It was not without difficulty and much suffering that, in the face of the active enemy, and while the monsoon was still raging, the army accomplished its retreat to the Dekkan. The difficulty of transport, which afterwards so sorely hampered the English in their early wars in India, and which was never well overcome until the future Duke of Wellington devised and applied an effectual remedy, beset the Moguls at every stage. The crossing of the flooded rivers was always a serious difficulty, and generally attended by great casualties. Numbers were drowned, numbers were cut off by the vigilant and daring pursuers: "thousands," says Khafi Khan, "remained behind and died." On one occasion it took seventeen days to pass the Kistna. Even when the monsoon was over, and the army was recruiting, in fancied security, on the banks of the Man, an untimely deluge of rain in the hills flooded the river; and the waters, pouring into the camp, "caused confusion and distress which defy description." The army, under the accumulated hardships and dangers of the situation,

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lost all power of expeditious marching, and dragged itself painfully along, only to find itself too late for its immediate object. Thus on one occasion it took twelve days to reach what ought to have been gained in two. On another it took seven weeks to march twenty-eight miles—*i.e.* little more, on an average, than half a mile a day! And this, while the Mahrattas were incredibly active and expeditious in all directions.

From time to time forts were reduced. But it was almost always after a prolonged investment, and not by siege or storm, but by systematic and lavish bribery. Many instances are given; but, as if weary of details, the historian at last makes the following *naif* and remarkable statement, putting, you will observe, the best, but that a very sorry face, on the transaction. His eulogistic apology, indeed, reads like sly satire. "The clemency and long-suffering and care of the Emperor were such, that when he ascertained that several fortresses had been long and vigorously besieged—and that *the garrisons were in difficulty*, he paid sums of money to the commandants, and so got the forts into his possession. It often happened also that he gave the same sum of money, neither more nor less, to the officer conducting the siege." This was certainly a peculiar proceeding, and not calculated to economise his fast-vanishing resources! And the same writer

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mentions, as a notable exception, that Torna was actually taken by assault; "not," he adds, "like the other forts by negotiations with the commandants, and promises of material advancement." Meanwhile the antipathy to the irksome and humiliating service grew more pronounced in the army, especially among the officers.

The Emperor was perplexed and embarrassed by "the irresolution of his *amirs*, who pined for ease, and complained of the dearness of grain, and the insalubrity of the climate, and by the grumbling of the . . . hard-tried soldiers." On the whole, it was too evident that this last plan also had failed, and that the end was near.

That end, the complete collapse of Aurungzib's design of conquering the Mahrattas, is vividly illustrated in a remarkable passage of the historian to whom I am so much indebted for the materials of my narrative. For it discloses unmistakably the irresistible progress of the insidious and mighty tide of Hindoo reaction, the practical subversion of the Imperial authority, and the establishment, within the territory of the Empire, of a Mahratta dominion, crude, barbarous, and grasping, but the natural consequence, and in logical language the inseparable accident, of the struggle which had initiated it, and which was destined to exhibit a terrible vitality and expansive power in the near future. Long as it is, this passage is well worth quoting

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with little abridgment, as a luminous picture of a great historical catastrophe, and as indisputable evidence that that catastrophe was the outcome of Aurungzib's impolicy, encountered and baffled by the creative and stimulating genius of his originally despised antagonist — "the mountain rat," as Aurungzib had contemptuously called him.

"When Ram Raja died, leaving only widows and infants, men thought that the power of the Mahrattas over the Dakhin was at an end. But Tara Bai, the elder wife, made her son of three years old successor to his father, and took the reins of government into her own hands. She took vigorous measures for ravaging the Imperial territory, and sent armies to plunder the six *subas* of the Dakhin as far as Sironj, Mandisor, and the *suba* of Malwa. She won the hearts of her officers, and for all the struggles and schemes, the campaigns and sieges of Aurungzeb up to the end of his reign, the power of the Mahrattas increased day by day. By hard fighting, by the expenditure of the vast treasures accumulated by Shah Jehan, and by the sacrifice of many thousands of men, he had penetrated into their wretched country, had subdued their lofty forts, and had driven them from house and home; still the daring of the Mahrattas increased, and they penetrated into the old territories of the Imperial throne, plundering and destroying wherever they went."

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Thus far he has shown how the Mahrattas retaliated the attack on their base by an offensive war on the Imperial territory in the Dekkan. But he next proceeds to show that so far from being mere plunderers and destroyers, they had also a constructive policy, still more fatal to the integrity of the Empire: how they deliberately and systematically instituted and maintained an authoritative fiscal establishment of their own in the Imperial territory; and so, like the fabled vampire, sucked the blood out of the body of their victim, and reduced it to inanition, while they converted what had been, in the first instance, *black-mail*, or a composition against simple plunder by violence, into an established and regularly enforced plan of political taxation, as it was familiarly regarded in later days. The peculiar interest and importance of the succeeding passage is that it well illustrates this transition period in the history of *chout*—the older promiscuous demand of it being now generalised, and occasional raids being now superseded by a comprehensive political organisation for the extension of Mahratta authority over the whole country, and securing the permanence of the fiscal extortion—the germ and essence of sovereignty—in the East.

I must observe that the following account of the Mahratta proceedings, though it may anticipate in some respects their mature plan of operations, does not include the elaborate

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scheme of confederacy, and partition of the profits of exaction, devised by the first notable Peishwa, Balaji Wishwanath. I now conclude Khafi Khan's summary of the result of the War of Mahratta Independence under Aurungzib :—

"In imitation of the Emperor, who, with his army and enterprising *amirs*, was staying in those distant mountains, the commanders of Tara Bai *cast the anchor of permanence* wherever they penetrated, and, having appointed revenue collectors, they passed the years and months to their satisfaction, with their wives and children, tents and elephants." [That is, in plain English, they effected a solid lodgment in the Dekkan, instead of simply making occasional incursions into it.] "Their daring went beyond all bounds. They divided all the districts among themselves, and, following the practice of the Imperial rule, they appointed their provincial governors, revenue-collectors, and toll-collectors."

Here the narrator passes from the origin to the consummation of this plan of establishing an *imperium in imperio* in the Mogul territory; or, in other words, from the past to the present, as it existed when he wrote.

"Their principal *subadar* [*i.e.* provincial governor] is commander of the army. Whenever he hears of a large caravan, he takes six or seven thousand horse, and goes to plunder it [*i.e.* exact transit duties]. He appoints *kamaish-dars* [*i.e.* revenue-collectors] everywhere to collect the

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chauth, and whenever, from the resistance of the *zamindars* and *faujdars* [*i.e.* the Imperial civil or military officials] the revenue-collector is unable to levy the *chauth*, he hastens to support him, and besieges and destroys his towns. And the tax-collectors of these evil-doers take from small parties of merchants, who are anxious to obtain security from plunder, a toll upon every cart and bullock, three or four times greater than the amount imposed by the *faujdars* of the Government. This excess he shares with the corrupt *jagirdars* and *faujdars*, and then leaves the road open. In every province he builds one or two forts, which he makes his strongholds, and ravages the country round. The *mukaddams*, or head men of the villages, with the countenance and co-operation of the infidel [*i.e.* the Mahratta] *subadars*, . . . have built forts, and with the aid and assistance of the Mahrattas they make terms with the royal officers as to the payment of their revenues [*i.e.* instead of paying the Imperial revenue as a matter of course, they higgle over it, and bargain for as little as possible —as natives, in such circumstances, know too well how to do]."

He then returns to the extensive range of the Mahratta incursions:

"They attack and destroy the country as far as the borders of Ahmadabad and the districts of Malwa, and spread their devastations through the provinces of the Dakhin to the environs of

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Ujjain. They fall upon and plunder large caravans within ten or twelve *kos* of the Imperial camp, and have even had the hardihood to attack the royal treasure."

And he concludes his account of the result of Aurungzib's last plan of subjugation, the reduction of the fortresses in the Ghats, thus significantly: "The sieges, after all, had no effect in suppressing the daring of the Mahrattas" (pp. 373–375).

With such evidence, tendered by a servant of Aurungzib, before us, was I wrong in saying that in resolving to engage in this unequal contest, he virtually signed the death-warrant of his Empire?

A similar inference, as to the fatal effect of the Emperor's cardinal act of impolicy in his internal administration — the reimposition of the *jizya*, may be drawn from a passage in the protest against it which, when I quoted the writer's general argument, I said I should cite later. After describing in glowing terms the complete political toleration of Akbar, Jehangir, and Shah Jehan, and its happy consequences, he thus proceeds:—

"Such were the benevolent inclinations of your ancestors. Whilst they pursued these great and generous principles, wheresoever they directed their steps, conquest and prosperity went before them; and there they reduced many countries and fortresses to their obedience.

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During your majesty's reign, many have been alienated from the empire, and further loss of territory must necessarily follow, since devastation and rapine now universally prevail without rstraint." This evidently refers to the later period of the reign, and proves that Jeswunt Sing could not have been, as Orme thought, the author of this remarkable document. It continues :—

"Your subjects are trampled under foot, and every province of your empire is impoverished; depopulation spreads, and difficulties accumulate. When indigence has reached the habitation of the Sovereign, and his princes, what can be the condition of the nobles? As to the soldiery, they are in murmurs; the merchants complaining, the Mahomedans discontented, the Hindoos destitute, and multitudes of people, wretched even to the want of their nightly meal, are beating their heads throughout the day in rage and desperation" (pp. 253–254).

This respectable dual testimony, from such opposite quarters, can leave little doubt that Aurungzib was the evil genius, and he and Sivaji the joint-underminers of the Mogul Empire. Aurungzib died in 1707.

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X

THE EMPEROR BAHADUR SHAH

ANOTHER war of succession was inevitable on the death of Aurungzib. The character and positions of his sons, and his treatment of them, combined to ensure it.

The late Emperor had always been very jealous and suspicious of the eldest, successively called Mohammed Moazzam, Shah Alum, and Bahadur Shah; had degraded, and for several years imprisoned him; but had afterwards restored him to favour, and sent him to command in the Punjab. The second surviving son, Azam Shah, had counted upon permanently supplanting his elder brother; and having been, while Bahadur Shah was under a cloud, treated as heir to the throne, took it very ill that his elder brother should recover his prospect of the succession. But towards the end of his reign the Emperor showed a marked affection and partiality for the child of his old age, Kam Bakhsh, and so encouraged him to expect to rule over at least a part of the Empire. Whether Aurungzib really, as was asserted, made a will, dividing his dominions between his three sons,

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seems very doubtful. But though the eldest professed, sincerely or not, to believe and be ready to acquiesce in such an arrangement, while he was not at all disposed to forego his claim to the Imperial throne, or to shirk the enforcement of it, if necessary by the sword, neither of the other Princes would hear of a peaceful settlement; thus a contest ensued in which they both perished, and Shah Alum, or Bahadur Shah, became sole and undisputed Emperor.

His character presents a complete contrast to that of his predecessor, and seems to have much resembled that of Dara Shukoh, Aurungzib's unfortunate eldest brother. It is thus sketched by Khafi Khan:—

"For generosity, munificence, boundless good-nature, extenuation of faults, and forgiveness of offences, very few monarchs have been found equal to Bahadur Shah—and especially in the race of Timour. But though he had no vice in his character, such complacency and such negligence were exhibited in the protection of the State, and in the government and management of the country, that sarcastic people found the date of his accession in the words *Shah-i-be-khabr*—'Heedless King.'"

There is probably here a good deal of exaggeration, and possibly of misconception. For, accustomed to his father's strict and meddlesome policy, public opinion was probably too

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exacting, and hardly made allowance not only for his acquired distaste for such a régime, from which he had suffered much, but for a deliberate and benevolent attempt to heal the wounds of the lacerated Empire by a forbearing and tolerant policy. Aurungzib had been a *sunni* zealot. But Bahadur, like Dara, was not orthodox, though he did not go so far in heterodoxy as his uncle. He made a *shia* innovation in the ritual, and thereby occasioned serious disturbance; but, after much petitioning and discussion, the Emperor gave way, and restored the old formula. His chief supporter and favourite minister, Munim Khan, was addicted to the *Sufi* mysticism, and wrote a book which was held to be unsound. Another indication of Bahadur's liberal tendencies in religious matters is his invitation to Govind, the Sikh *guru*, and his admission of him into his service.

Banda's revolt compelled him to authorise strong measures against the Sikhs; for their ferocities were manifest, and their renewed and unprovoked rebellion was a real and serious political danger. Bahadur, again, accepted the submission of the Rajputs; and, had he lived longer, they would probably have been sincerely reconciled, for a time at least, to the Imperial authority. I cannot find that the edict for the imposition of the *jizya* was formally rescinded. But from its re-enactment in a later reign, as well as from the nature of the case, there can,

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I think, be no doubt that it remained a dead letter under Bahadur. In Oudipur it was formally abolished, as appears from a treaty between the Emperor and the Rana, the text of which is given by Colonel Tod, and one article of which is to the above effect. But his most remarkable and considerable measures of conciliation were his concessions to the Mahrattas. To these I shall revert later, in tracing the development of the power of that people. But I may at once say now, that these, however well meant, were too characteristic of the designation of him as "Heedless King." For they were quite inconsistent, not only with the authority of the Emperor, as supreme in the Dekkan Provinces, but with the practical integrity of the Empire in that quarter, and a powerful stimulus to Mahratta ambition in Hindostan. The latter point, however, at least, he possibly failed to appreciate.

Zulfikar Khan, whom I have already mentioned, was one of Aurungzib's most distinguished and influential generals. He was, when that Emperor died, with Azam Shah. And Khafi Khan says that he "was very intimate with Sahu, or Shao, the grandson and right heir of Sivaji, and had long been interested in his affairs." Shao was in the custody of Azam Shah, and Zulfikar persuaded Azam to release him, probably hoping that Shao's influence with the Mahrattas might be exerted in Azam's

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favour in his forthcoming contest for the throne. Shao lost no time in mustering supporters among his tribesmen, and was soon re-established as Raja, and at the head of a considerable army. Zulfikar, now in the service of the victor, Bahadur Shah, and Subadar of the Dekkan, still favoured him, and backed his application to the easy-going Emperor for "a firman conferring on Sahu the *sur-deshmuki*[1] and the *chout* of the six *subas* of the Dakhin," on condition of "restoring prosperity to the ruined land." But, while Sahu had been secluded in the Imperial Court, Tara Bai, as I have related, had vigorously maintained the Mahratta War of Independence after the death of her husband, Ram Raja, and on behalf of her young son, the Raja of Kolapore. She now also, favoured by Munim Khan, the Khan Khanan and Zulfikar's rival, petitioned for a firman, in the name of her son, granting the *sur-deshmuki* over the same *subas*, and on the same pledge to abandon war and restore order in the country. "The King," says Khafi Khan, "in his extreme good-nature, had resolved in his heart that he would not reject the petition of any one." He was sorely perplexed by the counter-applications, but decided to grant both petitions. But Shao, supported by Zulfikar, and his better title, prevailed in the end, as the importance

[1] This new impost was one-tenth of the revenue, levied from the ryots directly.

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of Kolapore rapidly declined, and Munim Khan soon after died.

Such was the legalised ground of the persistent pretension of the Mahrattas to levy both *chout* and *sur-deshmuki* in the Dekkan, which at a later period was extended to the other provinces of the Empire by an extorted grant from Mohammad Shah.

On the whole, I cannot but think that Bahadur's character and policy have been misunderstood; and that, however inferior to his father in attention to business, firmness of purpose, and awe-inspiring majesty, and though unquestionably lavish to a vicious and dangerous extent, he was yet a Prince of no mean capacity, who had a definite and benevolent design of treading back his way to the earlier and better path of Mogul rule; and who, had he lived to carry it out, might, even under the difficult and disastrous circumstances of the time, have accomplished much improvement, and given a new lease of life to the moribund Empire. But he was an elderly man when he came to the throne. And in 1712, in his seventieth (lunar) year, he died rather suddenly. He was the last Emperor of whom anything favourable can be said. Henceforth, the rapid and complete abasement and practical dissolution of the Empire are typified in the incapacity and political insignificance of its Sovereigns.

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XI

THE INTERREGNUM

THE war of succession which had ended in Bahadur's favour had a counterpart on his death. He left four sons, who aspired to the throne; and all raised forces to support their respective pretensions. The eldest, Azimu-sh Shan, was attacked by a confederacy of the three younger, Jahandar Shah, Jahan Shah, and Kafi'u Shan, and disappeared in the *mêlèe*; how he met his death is uncertain. The victors soon fell out among themselves; Jahan Shah and Kafi'u Shan successively were killed in battle, and Jahandar Shah remained Emperor. But on his death, after eleven months, "an order," says Khafi Khan, "was made that the reign of Jahandar Shah should be considered an adverse possession," and that his successor's accession should be antedated so as to ignore the reputed interregnum. It deserved to be reprobated and consigned to political oblivion. For Jahandar Shah was an utterly degenerate representative of the house of Timour, Baber, and Akbar. Frivolous, profligate, cruel, and cowardly, servilely devoted to a favourite lady, Lal Kunwar, whose relatives he promoted wholesale to

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high honours, to the disgust of the old nobles and able and experienced servants of the State; he soon became generally odious and despicable. Thus he could count on little support in case of a rebellion. And with this he was at once threatened by Farokhsir, a son of Azimu-sh Shan, the vanished brother whom he had supplanted.

Assisted by two remarkable and valiant brothers, Husain Ali, his father's deputy in the Subadari of Patna, and Abdullah Khan, Subadar of Allahabad, Farokhsir claimed to succeed his father, whom he had proclaimed Emperor on Bahadur's death. As the armies of the rivals approached each other, some magnates deserted openly to the pretender. Others, notably Kilich Khan (the future Nizam-ul-Mulk), are said to have come to a private understanding with Farokhsir; and so general was the disaffection that Khafi Khan goes so far as to say that "the victory of Farrukh Siyar became the hope of every man in the army, great and small." Thus, though the latter's force was less than a third of the Emperor's, the conclusion was almost a foregone one from the first. But the unworthy successor of a line of heroes sealed his fate by fleeing ignominiously in the heat of the battle on Lal Kunwar's elephant. He betook himself to Zulfikar Khan's father, who gave him up to the tender mercies of the victor; and he was strangled in the fort of Delhi by the recently introduced Turkish bow-string.

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XII

THE EMPEROR FAROKHSIR

Farokhsir's reign is throughout an agitated and perplexing one, ending in another Imperial tragedy. Its external aspect is that of frequent attempts of the Emperor to assert his independence, and, on the other hand, of the resolute determination of the two Seiad brothers, to whom he owed his exaltation, to retain the effective management of his affairs.

Hence a series of violent crises, which at last result in Farokhsir's deposition, followed by his murder.

But, in view of later events, and of some significant circumstances during this reign, it is not easy to determine what were the actual aims of the Seiads. Whether they were sincerely loyal to their master at first, and estranged from him in consequence of undeserved suspicions and treachery on his part, and rightfully jealous of attempts to shake his confidence in them, and to remove and ruin them, from fear that they might prove not only intolerably overbearing, but disloyal; or whether, from the first, they sought to reduce the Emperor to a

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mere figure-head, and monopolise power in his name, as Mahadaji Sindia did in later days; or whether, again, they contemplated—as they were after his death suspected of doing—the actual subversion of the Imperial house, and the erection of a new monarchy on a non-Mogul and quasi-nationalist basis, seems to me by no means clear. But whatever their original designs, as the contest proceeded they certainly formed associations which tended in the second, if not even the third, direction; though this may have been in the first instance involuntary, and adopted simply in order to strengthen their hands, and confirm their grasp of power, as chief ministers of the Great Mogul.

Hence, in order to appreciate their later position, and the deeper and more than personal aspects of the revolution in which they—and their schemes—perished, it is necessary to sketch the vicissitudes of their uneasy relations with the Emperor, and the anti-Mogul and quasi-nationalist, if not Hindooising, policy to which, by choice or in self-defence, they were gradually committed.

Many circumstances combined to promote the prominence and commanding influence of Abdullah and Husain Ali at the opening of the new reign. They had been Farokhsir's earliest and staunchest supporters in his contest for the throne. It was an impetuous charge of Husain's troops which had intimidated Jahandar,

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and driven him to ignominious and fatal flight. And the gratitude of the new Emperor had been testified by his bestowing on Abdullah the office of Vizier, or Chief Minister, and that of Bukhshi, or virtually Commander-in-Chief, on Husain. Thus they held the combined civil and military authority under the Emperor. But these official sources of strength were reinforced by personal qualities, and a distinguished and trusty military *clientèle*. They were both men of great ability, resolution, and approved valour. And their tribal kinsmen had so high a traditional reputation for warlike gallantry, that they had acquired a conventional claim to lead the van in battle. Though reputed Seiads, or descendants of the Prophet, they had, for centuries, been established in India, and swarmed in the Doab, in the district of Muzaffarnagar (from the twelve villages which they held there their name Barha is by some authorities said to have been derived). Akbar had gladly received one of their leading warriors into his service, and employed him and his kinsmen in his campaigns. And members of the tribe or clan (as I may venture to call it) had later figured in the Imperial service. But, on the other hand, it must be remembered, with reference to the later conduct and probable designs of Abdullah and Husain, that the Seiads of Barha, though of alleged exotic origin, were old inhabitants of India, and prided themselves

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on being Hindostanees. As such, their sympathies would naturally be with the natives, rather than with the Mogul conquering class of foreigners. And although they were Mussulmans, they were also *Shias*, another cause of estrangement between them and the Moguls, who were mostly *Soonees*, and a strong ground for aversion to Aurungzib's reactionary and persecuting policy, and for rallying what I may call nationalist sentiment to their side under the banner of toleration and political equality, as established by Akbar.

The significance and importance of these last circumstances will be more evident when I reach the reign of Mohammad Shah. And I will next sketch the course of the misunderstanding and *simaltates* between the King and the king-makers down to its tragic close.

According to Khafi Khan, the *fons et origo mali* was attributable to the personal deficiencies of the Emperor himself. His relation to the Seiad brothers much resembled that of Akbar, on his accession, to Bairam and other chief officers engaged in the reconquest of the Empire. How Akbar, the young but sagacious hero, gradually emancipated himself, and vindicated his right to personal and independent rule, I have shown in a former course of lectures. But Farokhsir was in character the reverse of Akbar. He was not only, like his illustrious predecessor, young at his accession, but, according

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to Khafi Khan, "he was inexperienced in business and inattentive to affairs of State: . . . entirely dependent on the opinions of others, for he had no resolution or discretion. The timidity of his character contrasted with the vigour of the race of Timour, and he was not cautious in listening to the words of artful men. From the beginning of his reign he brought his troubles on himself."

The truthfulness of this general character will be too evident as I proceed. But the last remark requires qualification. His initial mistake, the author goes on to say, was his appointment of Abdullah as *Wazir*. But it may be doubted how far he could have safely done otherwise, without producing, if not an open rupture, a dangerous slackening of zeal on his behalf on the part of the Seiad brothers.

It is obvious, however, that the appointment was regarded with great jealousy by the leading Moguls; and that the Emperor was plied with assiduous attempts to shake his confidence in his Chief Minister, and to induce him to remove and disgrace him.

In these Kilich Khan, now created Nizam-ul-Mulk, took no part. He was sent as Subadar of the Dekkan, and I shall have later to notice his dealings with the Mahrattas on this first occasion of his Viceroyalty there.

The most active agent in this anti-ministerial intrigue was a favourite and confidant of the

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Emperor—Mir Jumla; and, not content with insinuations, he matched his influence in an irregular way against Abdullah's ministerial responsibility, and so inflamed the Emperor's jealousy of those who objected to this irregular interference. The Seiads "desired that no *mansabs* or promotions or appointments to office should be made without consulting them." This desire, in the case of the Prime Minister at least, seems to have been not unreasonable. But the Emperor heedlessly sanctioned his favourite's use of his name in the exercise of patronage. "This practice," says Khafi Khan, "was contrary to all the rules of the *Wazir's* office; it weakened the authority of the Seiads, and was the cause of great annoyance to the two brothers."

On the other hand, Abdullah had made Ratan Chand, a *Hindoo* grain dealer, his *dewan*, procured him the title of Raja, and "reposed in him authority in all government and ministerial matters." Thus on both sides there was provocation; and a serious quarrel—if not a *coup de main* for the arrest of the Minister—was only averted by the intervention of the Emperor's mother.

Mutual suspicion and animosity were increased by Husain's request to assume the *Subadari* of the Dekkan, but to exercise the office through a deputy. He feared to leave his brother exposed to enmity at Court, and especi-

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ally to Mir Jumla's insidious influence. But, at *his* instigation, the Emperor flatly refused to appoint Husain to this important charge, unless he would undertake it in person. "Husain Ali," says Khafi Khan, "refused to go to the Dakhin, and leave his brother [alone at Court]. A strong altercation arose, and matters went so far that both brothers refrained from going to Court and waiting upon the Emperor; they even meditated the levying of soldiers and throwing up lines of *defence* round their residence." This implies that their ascendancy was not due to superior force alone, and that they had real reason to fear, rather than to initiate, resort to violence.

The Emperor was sorely perplexed, and his well-affected advisers were much divided in opinion as to the solution of the dilemma. But at last his mother brought about a reconciliation. The Seiads were allowed to ensure their safety by planting their followers in the fort. And there they formally apologised to the Emperor, earnestly assured him of their loyalty, and deprecated his listening to their calumniators. Husain agreed to proceed in person to take up his government in the Dekkan, and Mir Jumla was to be sent, in a similar capacity, to Patna. But, before Husain departed, he significantly forewarned his Sovereign: "If in my absence you recall Mir Jumla — or if my brother again receives similar treatment,

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you may rely upon my being here—in the course of twenty days." The brothers also exacted the power of appointing commandants of forts and other officers independently of the royal nomination. Thus the crisis had greatly increased their power, at the expense of the Imperial prerogative.

But from his ignominious position the weak and rash monarch hoped to emancipate himself by an act of political treachery. Daud Khan was Subadar of Ahmedabad, or Guzerat. Farokhsir transferred him to Kandeish; secretly stimulating him to resist Husain, and promising him, if successful, the reversion of Husain's viceroyalty of the whole Dekkan. Daud acted on his private instructions. But Husain was not to be trifled with. He discovered the secret; brought Daud Khan to action; and the treacherous Sub-Viceroy was slain. The Emperor hypocritically lamented his fate to Abdullah: "It was a pity such a renowned and noble chief had been killed." The Minister, with grim suggestiveness, replied: "If my brother had been slain,—it would have given your Majesty satisfaction."

Another dangerous crisis was occasioned by the return of Mir Jumla to the capital. His pretext was a financial embarrassment and inability to pay his troops. But as they swarmed after him and threatened serious disturbance at Delhi, Mir Jumla's proceeding was suspected

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to be a *ruse*, preliminary to another attempt to arrest Abdullah. Again he prepared to defend himself against the covert scheme of violence. "The officers," says Khafi Khan, "of Seiad Abdullah, with suitable forces, ready accoutred and mounted on elephants and horses, held themselves ready for a conflict." This, however, was averted by Mir Jumla's being formally censured for quitting his government without leave, and being translated to the Punjab. But a strong suspicion prevailed that the Emperor was still playing false, and would presently recall the Seiad's enemy for his own sinister purpose. Abdullah, on his side, strengthened himself by a new contingent of his Barha clansmen.

Hitherto — though involving an extremely important political question, how far the Emperor, incapable as he was, was to be a free agent?—the aspect of the growing quarrel has been simply personal. The Emperor has been instigated to mistrust the fidelity of his powerful ministers, has favoured their adversaries, and committed himself to sinister plotting against one at least of the brothers. And though they continue to serve him, they utterly mistrust him; and the Vizier thinks it necessary to raise recruits for the maintenance of his authority, and even, as he assumes, for his personal security. But the next moves in this intricate game imply that issues deeper, more general, and more

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vital to the character, if not the existence, of the Mogul Empire were impending, if not already involved, in the personal rivalries and dissensions.

I mentioned that Abdullah had appointed as his *dewan* Ratan Chand, a Hindoo grain dealer, and, besides making him a titular Raja, had, in Khafi Khan's words, "reposed in him authority in all government and ministerial matters." This included patronage; and under Ratan Chand's auspices Aurungzib's reactionary policy had been extensively reversed, and Hindoos and other natives had been largely promoted and beneficed. Whether from the jealous desire to restore Mogul ascendancy, or to discredit and impugn Abdullah's conduct of affairs, and to weaken his influence over the community, two measures were now adopted, which tended to complicate the personal antagonism, and incline the Seiads to become the opponents of Mogul ascendancy, and the adherents—with whatever ulterior views—of Akbar's comprehensive policy of enlisting native support in all quarters.

The *jizya* was ordered to be reimposed or reinforced, and the *mansubs*, *jaghires*, and other recent acquisitions of Hindoos and other protégés of the Hindoo *dewan* to be reduced or confiscated. I need not dwell on the significance and dangerous tendency of the former step. As to the latter, Khafi Khan (who, as a bigoted Mussulman, though a candid historian, seems to approve

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it yet says: "This was very distasteful to Ratan Chand and other revenue officials. They addressed themselves to . . . Abdullah, and he was opposed to the issue of the order. All the Hindus were greatly enraged—because of the order for collecting the *jizya*, and of the advice about the cutting down of the *mansubs*."

These measures would thus naturally tend to promote a combination between the Seiads and the natives against the Mogul domination; and the more so as, though Mussulmans, the Seiads were not only Hindostanees, but prided themselves on being so; and would be the less inclined to acquiesce in the view that an Empire re-established by Akbar with the aid of Indian allies, entitled the descendants of the original conquerors of Baber's time, or the Soonee immigrants from Higher Asia, to treat the natives as a conquered, inferior, and non-privileged race.

While such was the tendency of the policy sanctioned by Farokhsir in Hindostan, his treatment of his Viceroy in the Dekkan produced the same effect. Husain Ali at first made a vigorous effort to establish the Imperial authority there, to coerce the Mahrattas, and settle the country. But he experienced unexpectedly formidable resistance, and his arms sustained several reverses; and he presently ascertained that the enemy were emboldened by the secret incitement of the Emperor himself. Farokhsir

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was, in fact, playing the same treacherous game to which he had resorted in the case of Daud Khan. Khafi Khan says: "The fact of the disagreement between the Emperor and the Saiyids was well known from the firmans and orders which had been sent secretly to Raja Sahu, the *dewans* and the chief *zamindars* of the Karnatik [*i.e. Bala* Ghat], desiring them not to obey Husain Ali Khan. They had accordingly showed resistance, and no settlement of Bijapur and Haidarabad had been effected." But again, as I said in Daud's case, Husain was not a man to be trifled with, and thus thwarted, with impunity. He now changed his tactics; negotiated with the Mahrattas, and concluded with them a most important compromise, which practically recognised them as co-partners in the revenue of the Imperial provinces, and, as a corollary, in political power there. As before, when Bahadur Shah had made such important concessions to the Mahrattas, the arrangement was made ostensibly as a treaty of peace, with an enemy too powerful, as experience had shown, to be conquered. Raja Shao was to receive one quarter of the land revenue collections, and the Government lands. Moreover, 10 per cent. from the ryots as *sur-deshmuki*. But besides this he was to share the *abwabs*, or additional cesses. These altogether would amount to nearly half the total Government revenue. Transit dues, or road duties, as they

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were called, were not to be levied. But this prohibition was futile, as the Mahratta collectors were too active and too strong to be resisted.

And the sting and humiliating circumstance of the arrangement was that the dues were not to be paid to the Raja by the Mahometan Government, but levied actively and haughtily by a body of Mahratta officials, while Balaji Washwanath and Jamnaji (the Raja's representatives), "with a suitable escort," were formally installed at Aurungabad, the Imperial capital of the Dekkan, as deputies of the Raja, "so that all civil and revenue matters might be settled through them." Thus the Mahratta plan of establishing virtually an anti-polity within the limits of the Mogul Empire was realised, and exhibited in a most glaring and provoking form. But this was not all. This so-called pacification amounted actually to an alliance between the Seiad and the essentially anti-Mogul community. Husain then, in Khafi Khan's words, "made no delay in writing for a royal firman confirmatory of this document [*i.e.* of the *sanad* containing the conditions of peace, which he had sent to Sahu, the Raja of Satara]. Several well-wishers of the State urged that it was not well to admit the vile enemy to be *overbearing partners in matters of revenue and government.*" This was, in itself, true enough. But it was the outcome of the

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Emperor's intrigue, suicidal equally in a personal and political sense. But ignoring this fact, and the danger of confirming his formidable lieutenant in his new friendship with the aspiring Hindoos, he "rejected the treaty."

Thus his Viceroy and the Mahratta Raja had a common grievance against him; and Husain Ali, like his brother at Delhi, was the more inclined to sympathise and combine with the Hindoos against Mogul ascendancy. The Emperor, on the other hand, was not unconscious of his perilous position. And this was impressed upon him by a new favourite, a Kashmirian of low origin and "disreputable character." Jealous of the Seiads, he instigated his Sovereign to compass their overthrow with the aid of three powerful men—Nizam-ul-Mulk, Surbuland Khan, Governor of Patna, and Raja Ajit Sing, the Rajput Viceroy of Ahmedabad. But Abdullah —vigilant and well-informed—won over the Raja to his interest. "Nizam-ul-Mulk and Surbuland Khan," says Khafi Khan, "were at first led to expect the appointments of *wazir* and *mirbakhshi*," *i.e.* the former was to succeed Abdullah as Prime Minister, and the latter Husain, as Commander-in-Chief. But they found that the fatuous Emperor was bent on appointing his miserable favourite to the former office. Whereupon in great indignation and despair of such a Sovereign, they renounced the commission, and left him to his fate. Khafi

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Khan says: "They were heart-broken, but they were not disposed to obey and submit to Itikad Khan" *i.e.* the favourite. In other words, they were ripe for desertion, if not for active rebellion.

Nizam-ul-Mulk was the more indignant, because not only had he lost his Government of Muradabad, and as yet received no other, but the despised and hated favourite had been appointed his (I presume non-resident) successor there, and Nizam-ul-Mulk's *jagir* there had been conferred on him. This was adding insult to injury. So, like Achilles, when Agamemnon deprived him of Briseis, he chewed the cud of bitter resentment, and passively awaited the gathering of the impending storm.

The Emperor, meanwhile, on occasion of a great festival, collected nearly 70,000 soldiers at the capital. While Abdullah, fearing a *coup de main* against himself, issued an order for enlisting 20,000 men, *of all tribes*. Hitherto he had relied almost entirely on his Barha *clientèle*. But this looks as if he was extending his connexion among the natives generally; in other words, throwing himself more on Indian support, as opposed to the Mogul party and their countrymen from Central Asia.

Once more, however, though a violent crisis was generally anticipated, a hollow reconciliation was patched up. The vacillating and timid Emperor visited the Minister, disclaimed all

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hostile intentions, and sent Ikhlas Khan, "an old and devoted friend of the two brothers," to reassure Husain Ali. Husain was much perplexed at the contradictory accounts transmitted to him successively of the relations of his brother with the Emperor. But receiving pressing and repeated letters from Abdullah, urging him to return to Delhi at once, he mobilised a strong army, including 16,000 Mahrattas, under one of the Raja's best generals, who was also, under the late arrangement, *Mahratta* Subadar of Kandeish, and marched northward. Ikhlas Khan delivered his conciliatory message *en route*, and Husain was otherwise informed officially that it was peace. Thereupon he publicly professed loyal intentions, *if* the Emperor "will deal with us kindly and without malice." But this qualified intimation of fidelity to the throne was quickly exchanged for a very different attitude on receipt of information from "trustworthy and confidential correspondents," who assured him that the general impression was that "the Emperor's proceedings were merely devices and snares that he was weaving to catch fools." Whatever had been Husain's real designs hitherto, he seems now to have made up his mind to dethrone the Emperor, or reduce him to a puppet. For he learned that Abdullah had gained over the very men whom the Emperor had hoped to employ as his champions. Surbuland had been

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appointed Subadar of Cabul through the Minister's influence, who had also "furnished him with money, elephants, and horses"; and Nizam-ul-Mulk had received from Abdullah the promise of the *Subadari* of Malwa; and other "waiters on providence" had also been won over to the Seiad's interest. Ajit Sing, Rana of Oudipur, on whom the Emperor had relied to take part against them, and whose daughter Farokhsir had married, had now, in spite of this connexion, "become a firm ally of the Minister." So much so, indeed, that the Emperor resolved to arrest him, but was foiled by Ajit's betaking himself to Abdullah's quarters.

Thus on approaching Delhi, Husain assumed an openly rebellious attitude, "by ordering his drums to be beaten loudly in defiance; for it is contrary to all rule for [a subject's] drums to be beaten near the residence of the Emperor." These are Khafi Khan's words; and he adds that Husain repeatedly said that he no longer reckoned himself among the servants of the monarch: "I will maintain the honour of *my race.*" This rather ambiguous expression seems to me to imply more than simple rebellion against the actual Sovereign. Representative and leader of a race of Indian warriors, traditionally famed for valour, he repudiates allegiance to the degenerate and faithless representative of foreign domination and Mogul ascendancy.

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And this interpretation seems to agree with the view taken of Husain's attitude by the Emperor's advisers. They urged him to open war, "particularly," says Khafi Khan, "the Mughals, who knew all about the matter." This also ambiguous phrase probably means that they plainly saw that more than a personal quarrel was on the *tapis*, and that what I may venture to call a quasi-nationalist movement against the foreign dynasty, and the ascendancy of its foreign supporters, was threatened.

Farokhsir, however, remained passive, until Abdullah in a public audience vented his own and his brother's grievances, and—as a condition of peace and reconciliation—demanded the removal of obnoxious persons, the appointment of officials generally, and the custody of the fortress by men of his and his brother's choice. Unable to resist, the Emperor granted these abject terms. Another bitter and mutually provocative interview followed, which ended in the Emperor's abruptly retiring to the *zenana*. Outside the palace there was much commotion. And eventually a party, supported by a brother of the Seiads, invaded the palace, discovered, seized, and blinded the unfortunate Sovereign, and consigned him to the same small, close chamber in which his predecessor, Jahandar Shah, had been strangled. And soon after, on his attempting to escape, he suffered the same fate.

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The power of the Seiad brothers was now completely predominant at Delhi. The palace was occupied by their agents, and guarded by their soldiers. Their troops, and those of their confederates, Ajit Sing, the Rajput Rana of Oudipur, the Mahratta contingent contributed by the Raja of Satara, and other native forces co-operated with their stout Barha clansmen. Nizam-ul-Mulk, the most powerful of the Mogul party, and other influential men of the same class, who had been alienated by Farokhsir's devotion to his disreputable favourite, and had been courted by Abdullah, at least passively supported them; other would-be adherents of the fallen Emperor had been paralysed by his timidity and surrender of himself and his stronghold to the plausible demands of the Seiads, that they meant to obey him when assured of their own safety; and no organised resistance to them was, for the time, feasible. Thus, without opposition, they selected a grandson of Bahadur Shah, and proclaimed him Emperor. Whatever their ulterior designs, it was evident from their treatment of him, and of those who quickly succeeded him, that for the present their intention was to rule through the medium of an Imperial puppet. Thus Khafi Khan says of Kafi'u-din, the one now chosen: "This monarch had not the slightest control in matters of government." And when he shortly died, from consumption, and they replaced him by his

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elder brother, Kafia-u-Doula, the latter also soon died from dysentery; and the king-makers replaced him by Mohammad Shah, son of Jahan Shah, and grandson of Aurungzib—a young prince of eighteen years of age. Feeble health might have afforded a pretext for secluding the two moribund Princes. But the plan was pursued in this case without any such excuse. Khafi Khan thus describes the treatment of Mohammad Shah: "All the officers and servants around the Emperor were, as before, the servants of Saiyid Abdullah. When the young Emperor went out for a ride, he was surrounded, as with a halo, by numbers of the Saiyid's adherents; and when occasionally he went out hunting, or for an excursion into the country, they went with him, and brought him back."

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XIII

THE EMPEROR MOHAMMAD SHAH. PROGRESS OF THE ANTI-MOGUL REACTION

WHILE the Barha *prætorians* thus sequestered the Emperor from free intercourse with his subjects, the civil administration evinced the ascendancy of the Hindooising Seiad in a manner equally obnoxious to the Mogul temper. "Ratan Chand," continues Khafi Khan, "held firm his position. His authority extended over all civil, revenue, and legal matters, even to the appointment of *kazis* in the cities and other judicial offices. All the other Government officials were put in the background, and no one would undertake any business but under a document with his seal."

Imperialist sentiment and the pride of the Mogul race were further outraged by other circumstances. The magnificence of the Great Mogul's Court had been proverbial; and its hoarded treasures and works of art were of world-wide celebrity, and had increased its prestige. But it was now reported that the rude and uncourtly Seiad Chieftains had taken

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"possession of, and selected for themselves, whatever they pleased of the royal treasure, jewels, works of art, elephants, and horses." And, worse and more insulting still, Abdullah was said to have appropriated to himself some of the late Emperor's most beautiful inmates of the zenana.

The same greedy and reckless disposition to strip majesty of its externals, and to despoil, with military license, instead of treating with decent reverence, the Sovereign whom they had themselves placed on the throne, was again exhibited by Husain Ali at Agra. There the soldiers had, in defiance of the Seiad's choice, extracted from a long imprisonment Prince Neku Siyar, a son of Prince Akbar, Aurungzib's rebellious son, and proclaimed him Emperor. But Husain besieged and reduced Agra by famine, and imprisoned the Pretender. And he treated as spoil of war, and, says Khafi Khan, "took possession of the treasure, jewels, and valuables which had accumulated there in the course of three or four hundred years, from the days of Sikander Lodi and Babar Badshah." Some of these he specifies, and estimates the value of the whole at two or three krors of rupees, *i.e.* the same number of millions sterling. And so completely had the filibustering spirit superseded that of the politic statesman, that he fell out with his brother by monopolising the spoil; and only through the mediation of

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Ratan Chand at last "grudgingly surrendered to him twenty-one lacs of rupees."

Another insult to the Imperial majesty and to the religious susceptibilities of the Moguls was offered by Ajit Sing, the close ally and active coadjutor of the Seiads. I mentioned that his daughter had been married to Farokh-sir. He now sent her home with her jewels and paraphernalia, and was reported to have made her "throw off her Mussulman dress, and dismiss her Muhammadan attendants." Whereupon Khafi Khan remarks :—

"In the reign of no former Emperor had any Raja been so presumptuous as to take his daughter after she had been married to a King and admitted to the honour of Islam."

A little later Ajit ventured on another piece of *outrecuidance*, similarly obnoxious to Mussulman sentiment, and indicative of the increasing boldness of the Hindoo reaction. As Subadar of Ahmedabad, he forbade the slaughter of cows. But what Khafi Khan calls a "sharp warning" from Nizam-ul-Mulk constrained him to draw in his horns, and cancel the offensive order.

His rival Rajput Prince, Jei Sing, of Amber, or Jeipur as it was called later, had hitherto been an anti-Seiad. But he now submitted to them, and was appointed *faujdar*, or military commandant of Surat. "Under this arrangement," says Khafi Khan, "the two Rajas held

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all the country from thirty cos of Delhi to the shores of the sea at Surat." Thus the Seiads were extending and confirming their Indian connexion in various directions. And their anti-Mogul policy was comprehensively indicated by the formal abolition—once more—of the *jizya*. This had been effected immediately on the fall of Farokhsir. Khafi Khan's record of the fact is significant of the influence at work, and of his antipathy to that influence. He says: "In the council of the first day, in accordance with the desire of Raja Ajit Sing, and of the *bigoted* Raja Ratan Chand, an order was passed for the abolition of the *jizya*, and assurances of security and protection [*i.e.* of the Hindoos] were circulated all over the country."

The general impression of the state of affairs at this period, and the profound indignation it engendered in the breasts of the old nobles and adherents of the Mogul interest, are forcibly conveyed in the following passage of the sympathetic author whom I have used so freely:—

"The Emperor had no power in the government of the State, and . . . everything was directed by Ratan Sing and other vile infidels. The two Saiyids, the real rulers, thought themselves masters of the pen and masters of the sword in Hindostan, and as opposed to their judgment and the swords of the Barhas, the Mughals of Iran and of Turan were as nobodies. They did

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not remember that these Mughals had come 1000 or 2000 miles from their native countries, and that by their courage and sound judgment the wide realm of Hindostan, with its great kings and famous *rajas*, had by hard fighting been won for the Emperor Babar. For two hundred years they had lived in the favour of the house of Timur, and they now felt the ignominy of seeing *their* Emperor without any power in his own State. Pride, courage, and honour continually spurred this lion-hearted noble [*i.e.* Haidar Kuli Khan, of whom more hereafter] to make an end of this state of things, and to take revenge."

While such sentiments would at any period have been strongly operative among the Mogul magnates, they had been naturally intensified by the policy of Aurungzib, and his exclusive reliance, in his later years, on their co-operation in its execution. He had alienated the Rajputs, and they figure no more in his anti-Mahratta campaigns after Sivaji's final revolt.

The Mahratta War of Independence after Sivaji's death had both exasperated and humiliated the Mogul partisans of the Emperor's obstinate but vain attempt to restore his military prestige, and realise his programme of proving and treating the Hindoos as a twice-conquered people. And that not only this should fail, but that the crushed worm should have turned, and, under the auspices of Indian Shia leader-

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ship, should turn the tables on their former masters, reduce the Great Mogul to a puppet, and the proud nobles of his race to political inanity, and monopolise power, patronage, and wealth, was an unspeakable degradation and cause of offence to those trained in the school of Aurungzib. Hence another revolution, and a desperate attempt to subvert the Seiads and reverse the position, was inevitable. Nor was the initial agent of such a policy far to seek.

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XIV

MOGUL COUNTER-REVOLUTION

CHIN KILICH KHAN, or as he was now entitled and is best known to history as Nizam-ul-Mulk, was both an able and experienced soldier and a wily and far-sighted politician. Though born in India, he was a Mogul to the core, a strong Imperialist, a bigoted Mussulman, and an inveterate opponent of native predominance and Mahratta independence. His father had been a distinguished general under Aurungzib; and both he and his son had served long and well in the Dekkan wars. Nizam-ul-Mulk's military reputation and political consideration were well established, as might be inferred from Farokhsir's attempt to employ him for his liberation from the yoke of the Seiads, and from Abdullah's courting and conciliating him on the eve of the Imperial tragedy. In that tragedy he took no active part, though he remained passive on its occurrence. But he was biding his time, and preparing resources for a *contre-coup*. And though, for the present, a good understanding seemed to prevail between him and the Seiads, each party had good reason

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to distrust the other. The Seiads were well aware that Nizam-ul-Mulk had been selected, and had been quite willing, to compass their overthrow. And he well knew that both on this account, and from his prominence and his notorious character, reputation, and political views, they could not but regard him as a formidable danger to their usurped authority and hybrid political connexion. For the time they propitiated and got rid of him at Delhi, by appointing him Subadar of Malwa. But, as I shall show presently, they calculated on hemming him in between, and coercing if not destroying him by the instrumentality of, their own adherents.

Nizam-ul-Mulk, on the other hand, was not only personally clear-sighted, cautious, and vigilant, but was put on his guard from head-quarters, and stimulated by an appeal to his loyalty, to exert himself in his own defence, and for the emancipation of the Emperor. Mohammad Shah's mother was, says Khafi Khan, "well acquainted with State business, and was a woman of much intelligence and tact." And in frequent letters she informed him "that the constraint used by the Saiyids was so strict that the Emperor had only liberty to go to service on the Sabbath, and that he had no power of giving any orders; and that the Saiyids . . . proposed . . . to get rid of Nizam-ul-Mulk, and then to do as they pleased; that the

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Emperor and his mother had full reliance on Nizam-ul-Mulk, that he would not fail in the loyalty which his ancestors had ever exhibited." Such an intimation, and such an appeal, were quite in accordance with the views and resolves of the able and ambitious man to whom they were addressed.

"Nizam-ul-Mulk," says Khafi Khan, "perceived that the brothers had the fixed intention of overthrowing the royal house and removing the Khalifa of the world." Though hitherto the conduct of the Seiads seemed to imply a design to reduce the Emperor permanently to a mere *roi fainéant*, and to wield independent power in his name, as the Peishwas did later in the name of the imprisoned Raja of Satara, and Mahadaji Sindia in the name of the later Emperor, Shah Alam; these words indicate rather his suspicion that they aimed ultimately at founding a new dynasty of their own, a nationalist power, subversive of the foreign Mogul element, and based upon native Indian support, Hindoo, and probably the earlier Afghan element, which had dominated India for centuries before Baber's incursion, and had been overthrown by him, and in its later phase by Akbar. But in either case he foresaw the ruin not only of the Imperial house, but of the ascendancy of the race which it represented, and which was identified with Nizam-ul-Mulk's antecedents, associations, and personal interests. Hence to overthrow the

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Seiads, and restore the Emperor to his old position of an independent Sovereign, and conspicuous and dignified Head of the conquering race,—in fact, as the Great Mogul,—was his immediate and urgent aim. But "the longest way round is the shortest way home." And as a *coup d'état* at Delhi was not at once feasible, he preferred to take up his appointment in Malwa, and there accumulate and organise at his leisure the means for striking a decisive blow later. His preparations for this were systematic and elaborate. Thus Khafi Khan tells: "There accompanied him more than a thousand companions, *mansubdars* and *jagirdars*, who were poor and sick at heart with the unkindness shown by the Saiyids, and through pay being in arrear. Nizam-ul-Mulk busied himself in collecting soldiers and artillery, which [observes the writer significantly] are necessary for governing the world and keeping it in order." [In other words—for effecting a counter-revolution, as "revolutions are not made with rose-water."] "He gave five hundred horses with accoutrements and arms to Muhammad Ghiyas Khan for his *Mughal* fraternity, and turned them into horsemen. He lent large sums of money to others, binding them to himself by the bonds of debt and kindness." With characteristic adroitness he secured another partisan, while literally conforming to the orders of Husain, as Commander-in-Chief. Murhamat Khan, the commandant of a fortress

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at Mandu, had held back, on pretence of illness, when summoned to join Husain on his late march to Delhi, and had been in consequence superseded. But he had resisted the mandate, and Husain instructed Nizam-ul-Mulk to remove him. This he did by diplomacy, but only to attach him to his own service. And he had at this time "collected," says Khafi Khan, "7000 or 8000 horse and materials of war."

On the other hand, the Seiads were on their guard, and preparing to circumvent him. They had appointed him to Malwa, not only to get rid of him, for the time, from the capital, but because they relied, if necessary, on concentrating against him forces adequate to overpower him. "Malwa," says Khafi Khan, "was half-way between Delhi and the Dakhin." Husain's forces were in possession of the capital. And Alam Ali, Husain's adopted son, "with a sufficient army," had been left as Deputy Subadar in the Dekkan. And a third force, under a Rajput Bhim Sing, had been commissioned to march against the *zamindar* of Bundi.[1] But on the promise of promotion to the dignity of Maharaja, Bhim Sing was secretly engaged to hold himself in readiness to act against Nizam-ul-Mulk in the projected triple combination. Then Husain, throwing aside the veil, "began to pick a quarrel" with his formidable rival. His charges were conclusively answered. But, probably as a test of his doubtful obedience to

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the usurped authority of the Seiad brothers, or as a plausible ground for attacking him if he refused to obey the order, Husain announced that he wished himself to assume the Government of Malwa, and Nizam-ul-Mulk was summoned to return to Court, with the promise of an appointment to a Subadary elsewhere.

This capricious supersession might well exasperate him. And he was too acute not to see that, in one way or another, his ruin was intended. And private information combined to impress upon him the conviction that the time was come for him also to throw off the mask, and begin his campaign against his personal enemies, and the obnoxious régime which they had established and were consolidating. Khafi Khan says: "He had received letters from the Emperor and from private friends, telling him there was no time to be lost, and that what he had to do he must do quickly." This writer asserts that "he had formed the design of conquering the Dakhin, and of setting free that land of treasure and of soldiers." In other words, he realised that the military command of the Dekkan would be the most effectual means of neutralising the league between the Seiads and the Mahrattas, and would be a most serious blow to their Hindooising policy. He could also rely on Mogul sympathy in that quarter, as proved the case speedily. On crossing the Nerbudda, he at once received an overture for

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the surrender of the great fort of Asseergurh, which was executed; and the day after, the capital of Kandeish, Burhanpur, was similarly given up without a blow, by the officer specially deputed by Alam Ali Khan to defend it. There he was also joined by Iwaz Khan, another official in Berar, and by "troop after troop of adherents." Thus his position grew rapidly stronger. The surrender of Asseergurh was well calculated to excite the alarm of the Seiads. For, besides its great strength, it showed that the military superiority on which they relied was being sapped by their astute adversary. An emissary of Nizam-ul-Mulk had tampered with the garrison, and his own soldiers had compelled the Seiad's commandant to open his gates. The Nizam was moreover joined by Minbulkar, "a famous Mahratta chieftain, with his followers." "And," adds Khafi Khan, "all the officials of Burhanpur, and many of the *zamindars* of the neighbourhood, had taken the same course."

The Seiads were now seriously alarmed, and much perplexed and divided in their counsels. Husain was inclined to go in person to the Dekkan. Ratan Chand "advised a peace and the surrender of the *subas* of the Dakhin to Nizam-ul-Mulk." But to this Husain would not consent. And it was hoped that the previously conceived plan of exposing Nizam-ul-Mulk to a combined attack by Bhim Sing and his col-

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leagues, Dilawar Khan and Alam Khan, would suffice to overpower him. Dilawar was Husain's *bakshi* or chief military officer in Malwa, and in obedience to pressing orders he increased his forces, and crossed the Nerbudda, while Alam Ali was engaged in "enlisting as many Mahrattas as he could," and gathering together the great *faujdars* at Aurungabad, "intending to place the enemy between two armies." But while he tarried for intelligence of Dilawar's approach, Nizam-ul-Mulk marched promptly against Dilawar and his Rajput confederates, engaged them in a bloody and obstinate battle, and utterly defeated them. Dilawar, Raja Bhim, and another Rajput Raja, Gaj Sing, and 4000 or 5000 soldiers were killed. The writer notices that when, at last, the army of the Barhas fled, the Rajputs, true to their traditional character, "disdained to escape," and fell upon the field.

The tidings of this event further distracted the councils of the Seiad brothers. So serious was the prospect in the south, that they were half inclined to march thither together, taking the Emperor with them. But they were averse to risk their hold over the capital, and, on tidings of another catastrophe, they decided to separate.

Alam Khan, Husain's Deputy Subadar in the Dekkan, was a young man, twenty-two years of age, "distinguished," says our author,

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"by all the determination and bravery of the Barha Saiyids." But he was rash, self-willed, and no general. The Mahratta *sirdars* and his own officers advised him to await, behind the walls of Aurungabad or Ahmednuggur, the arrival of Husain Ali, while the Mahrattas might hang upon and harass Nizam-ul-Mulk's army, and "carry on that Cossack warfare for which the people of the Dakhin are so famous." But this he disdained to do. His able and wily adversary, though seriously impeded by the monsoon, skilfully accomplished the crossing of a flooded river, to the surprise of Alam Ali Khan; repulsed the daring onslaughts of the Mahratta skirmishers, and brought on an action on ground chosen by himself. Again he gained a decisive victory. Alam, fighting bravely to the last, was slain, together with many other leading officers, "men of renown," as the author calls them. Nizam-ul-Mulk's loss was small; and the moral effect of his success was attested by the defection to him of the Subadar of Hyderabad, with six or seven thousand horse.

But more notable and momentous was this moral effect in Hindostan.

The Seiad brothers prepared to make an extraordinary effort to meet the crisis. They resolved to raise an army of 100,000 men, from among their clansmen, and—a significant fact—from among the (Indian) *Afghans*. With this army Husain was to march against Nizam-

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ul-Mulk, taking the Emperor in his train, as Henry VI. was taken, for the same purpose, in the Wars of the Roses, while Abdullah was to maintain order in the capital.

But "the *jamadars*," or, as we might call them, the recruiting officers, "far and near had noticed the declining fortunes of the two Saiyids, and they were unwilling to go to the Dakhin, so the desired army was not raised." With difficulty about half the proposed force was eventually collected and sent forward, while Husain tarried at Tira, "thirty cos from Fathpur," in company with the Emperor.

Besides the chronic hostility of the decided Mogul party, even the previous adherents and beneficiaries of the Seiads were now inclined to desert them. This was probably, in a great degree, from a strong disposition to be found on the winning side. But Khafi Khan ascribes it to more respectable motives. He says: "The infamous murder of the martyr Emperor (Farokhsir), the sight of the indignities which the Emperor, the representative of the house of Timur, had to endure, and the fact of the administration being under the direction of a base-born shopkeeper (Ratan Chand) had, under the guidance of the Converter of Hearts,—changed their feelings." In other words, the general sentiment among the protégés as well as the foes of the brothers was hostile to them as Ratan Chand's patrons, and favourable to

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the emancipation of the Emperor—the warcry of the counter-revolutionists.

In these circumstances, a plot was concerted, in the deepest privacy, for assassinating Seiad Husain Ali. The arch-conspirator was a Mogul noble, Itimadu-d Daula, or Mohammed Amin Khan, with two confederates, his "close and trusted friend," Sadut Khan, of Persian origin, and the founder of the later Oude dynasty, and Haider Khan, a Chaghati Turk, of illustrious descent, though Elphinstone describes him as "a savage Calmuc."

Only the Emperor's mother and a protégé of Seiad Abdullah were privy to the plot, which was not disclosed either to the Emperor himself or to Itimadu-d Daula's own son. At least so says Khafi Khan; though I suspect that Haidar Kuli Khan (of whom more presently) was apprised of it just before it was carried into execution. The third conspirator, Haider Khan, undertook the deed, and, while Husain read a petition which he had presented to him, accomplished his fatal object at a single stroke of a dagger. The assassin was cut down promptly, and a fierce contest ensued between Husain's partisans and the Moguls, who, says the historian, "assembled from every side." Itimad had in the meantime betaken himself to the tent of Haidar Kuli Khan. I have already quoted an account of his strong sympathy with the cause of the Mogul Imperialists. Husain

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had just made him commandant of the artillery. But Itimad now probably informed him of the intended *coup de main*. And after it was delivered he at once ranged himself on the side of the conspirators. "He stepped boldly forward, ready to show his loyalty and devotion in vigorous action." Itimad and he directed Sadut Khan to visit the Emperor in his private quarters, and induce him to show himself. This was done; and Itimad then "mounted him on his own elephant, and sat behind him as his attendant." In the confusion only a very slender escort could be mustered, and this was exposed to a fierce onslaught, headed by "that raging lion of the Barhas, Izzut Khan," a nephew of the Seiad brothers. "On one side," says Khafi Khan, "the braves of Barha rushed boldly into the fray; on the other, the valiant men of Iran and Turan came from every side eager for the fight." But Izzut was killed; and the victory remained with the Imperialists.

The Emperor signalised his recovered freedom by appointing Itimad Vizier, and bestowing various distinctions on Haidar Kuli Khan, Sadut Khan, and other active promoters of the counter-revolution.

Though thus, both in the Dekkan and in Hindostan, the toils were closing around Abdullah, he made strenuous exertions to recover his ascendancy. His brother and his valiant

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nephew Izzut, as well as his other nephew in the Dekkan, were no more. His Minister, Ratan Chand, had been maltreated by the Mogul mob and the *budmashes* of the camp, carried to the Emperor's quarters, and confined in chains by Itimad. Another of his favoured Hindoo officials had fled. And Husain's army had become the Emperor's, though there was treachery in the camp, and some officers and their troops were meditating desertion. Abdullah's first step was to set up an anti-Emperor, as another puppet. In this he experienced much difficulty. More than one Prince positively refused his overtures. But he succeeded at last in raising to the throne a brother of the *roi fainéant* who had died of consumption,—as Muhammad Ibrahim.

He then made strenuous efforts to secure partisans, and to raise a new and large army, to confront that which had now passed over to the real Emperor. He was constrained to fall back upon many who had been unemployed, disgraced, even imprisoned, under his previous régime. Among these were Itikad Khan, Farokhsir's old favourite, who had plotted his destruction under that Emperor, and Hamid Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk's uncle, whom he had deprived of his *jaghire* when the nephew had declared against the rule of the Seiads, and proceeded to hostilities. Such officers were little to be trusted, and their appointment showed

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that Abdullah's game was a desperate one. He was also much embarrassed for money, in consequence of the exorbitant demands of the soldiers, who were the more inclined to insist upon high terms for their services, because they were in bad case from previous arrears of pay, or in the instance of the Barha recruits, because they rated themselves by no means modestly. Thus a brother of Abdullah brought with him, says Khafi Khan, from the Doab, "ten or twelve thousand horse, also one hundred and fifty carts full of Barha Saiyids, each of whom thought himself equal to twenty well-accoutred horsemen, and had come in the expectation of making himself an *amir*, an elephant rider, and a general." Their gallantry in the battle that followed, as on other occasions, went some way to justify the soaring ambition of these soldiers of fortune. Indian Afghans also flocked to the quasi-nationalist standard in great numbers. And from the now Imperial army numbers of Husain's old troops deserted and joined Abdullah, as did Churaman, the Chief of the Jats, after an unsuccessful attempt to fire the Emperor's magazine, in which he was foiled by Haidar Kuli Khan's vigilance. Thus Abdullah contrived to muster an enormous but heterogeneous army. It is said to have amounted to nearly 100,000 men, and to have been twice as numerous as that of the Emperor. But it was a disorderly and ill-disciplined host.

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Thus Khafi Khan says: "There were such contentions among the officers, who were unwilling to serve under the orders of each other, that a proper disposition could not be made. Each chief raised his standard where he chose, and would not consent to obey any other."

Before the battle began, the character of the contest was illustrated by the execution of the captive Hindoo Minister, who had lately given its tone to the administration of the Seiads. Khafi Khan's sympathies are vigorously intimated in his record of this retributive act. "The Emperor . . . ordered that the head of the vile Ratan Chand, who had been the chief cause of the unpopularity of the Saiyids, should be struck from his filthy body, so that the world might be gladdened by being cleansed from his polluting existence. So his head was cut off and thrown as a propitious omen before the feet of the Emperor's elephant."

The battle that followed was long and well contested. But it was decisive, not only as an Imperialist victory, but of the great political issues which were involved in the contest. The desperate gallantry of the Barha chiefs and their followers was pitted against the skilful and terribly effective fire of the Imperial artillery, directed by Haidar Kuli Khan; and the fortune of war, at the close of the day, still trembled in the balance. Haidar

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Kuli's guns "shook the new levies in the enemy's army," and a flight began among them, in which older soldiers joined. But Najm-ud-din Ali, another of Abdullah's many brothers, and on this occasion, according to our author, "the leading spirit of the Barha army," planted a battery on a hill commanding the battlefield, and followed up this manœuvre by a bold charge with 14,000 or 15,000 horse upon the royal artillery. A fierce contest followed; and Khafi Khan says that the Seiads "nearly won the battle." But the Imperialists attacked and captured the battery on the hill; and night closed on an undecided strife. But Haidar Kuli gave the enemy no respite. In the darkness, "he pushed forward his guns, and opened a heavy fire" on the hostile army, which was constrained to fall back, and many made off in the obscurity and confusion.

"Out of the 100,000 horsemen of the enemy's army," says Khafi Khan, "only 17,000 or 18,000 held their ground through the terrible cannonade of that night." Whether these alone took part in the final struggle is not clear; but it seems to be implied in these words, as well as by what follows:—

"In the morning the Imperial army advanced, and was met by Najm-ud-din Khan with some other brave and devoted Barha chiefs,—and a hard fight ensued." Abdullah, seeing "the desperate position of his brother, . . . brought

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up a party of the Barha braves to his rescue." Thereupon Najm-ud-din and his followers "recovered their powers, and fought so fiercely that . . . the royal army began to waver." But again Haidar Kuli interposed, and with decisive effect. He led a charge on Abdullah's flank, which Khafi Khan describes as "overwhelming." Abdullah, following a practice which resembled that of knights in the Middle Ages, as Hallam notices, "dismounted from his elephant in the hope that the Barha braves would dismount from their horses and join him [in a charge]." But his action was misunderstood, and interpreted as a commencement of flight. And thereupon, except 2000 or 3000 horse in his immediate neighbourhood, the whole army broke and fled. Haidar Kuli himself captured Abdullah, and led him on an elephant, and wounded, into the presence of the Emperor, who "spared his life, and gave him in charge to his captor." His gallant brother had been mortally wounded. And Hamid Khan, Nizam-ul-Mulk's uncle, gave himself up, and was pardoned; as was also the pseudo-Emperor, Sultan Ibrahim, who was taken prisoner, but released as having been an involuntary tool in the Seiad's hands.

It would not be easy to exaggerate the important consequences of this counter-revolution on the future fortunes of India. Had not the

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main knot been cut by the assassination of Husain, the Seiads might have prevailed. And they might have established and maintained a strong government on a tolerant basis, with the support of the Indian Mussulmans and the Hindoo Princes.

The encroaching and predatory character of the Mahratta polity would undoubtedly have been a difficulty. But the compromise suggested by Ratan Chand, to cede the Dekkan Provinces to Nizam-ul-Mulk, might have been adopted, by making them over unreservedly to the Raja of Satara—or in fact, to the Peishwa and his subordinate Chieftains. Whether this would have prevented them from pushing on into Hindostan and trying conclusions with the new monarchy of the Seiads, acting in the name of a puppet Emperor, or in their own name, if they preferred to establish a new dynasty, is doubtful. But the Mahrattas might have seen that their safest course was to keep on friendly terms with the rulers at Delhi, for fear of another counter-revolution in the Mogul interest, especially when the Europeans began to enter the list, and threatened to break up the whole political system of native India.

And meanwhile the Seiads would have avoided the fatal carelessness and lethargy which opened India to the incursion of Nadir Shah, and the consequent utter prostration of the Imperial majesty and authority.

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On the other hand, the counter-revolution, though successful at the moment, failed, through the personal defects of the Emperor, to retrieve the failing fortunes of the Empire. It restored the Emperor to personal freedom, and to the exercise of his personal sovereignty, according to the traditional practice of the Mogul monarchy. And had Mohammad Shah, like his illustrious predecessors, been a Prince of mature age, versed in affairs, and from experience capable of discerning, and from disposition inclined to pursue, his true interests, and steadily supporting a sagacious and loyal Minister; though he could not have succeeded in restoring the Empire to its pristine vigour, or re-extending it to its old limits, he might probably have retarded the day of its dissolution; ruled respectably; and avoided the fatal concessions which we shall see he was constrained to make to the Mahrattas, and the crushing overthrow and abject humiliation which he suffered from Nadir Shah.

The most singular and, at first sight, paradoxical circumstance connected with the counter-revolution is the attitude and conduct of Nizam-ul-Mulk, contrasted with his subsequent assumption of virtual independence of the Emperor in the Dekkan. Though absent from the scene of the contest, and though there is no reason to suspect that he was privy to the assassination plot, he was unquestionably the master-spirit

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of the Mogul party's movement against the régime of the Seiads. And the professed objects of that movement were to restore the power of the Emperor, and to re-establish Mogul domination. Yet, when these objects had been attained, he practically repudiates the Emperor's authority, and becomes himself a dismemberer of the Empire. This inconsistency may be readily accounted for by assuming that he was actuated simply by personal feelings. And, to a certain extent, this is no doubt true. It is true also that he was a wily politician, who was given to altering his course according to the circumstances of the time—in fact, that he was an opportunist. But I shall show later that he was not so inconsistent as he seems; and that his later line was an alternative adopted on the conviction that the Emperor was a bruised reed, and the restoration of his effective power impracticable; and that (if I may use a strong metaphor) when the vessel of State was hopelessly doomed, it was time to take to a boat, and save himself and some of the crew from shipwreck.

Nizam-ul-Mulk had been, in the first instance, appointed Subadar of the Dekkan by the Seiads, in acknowledgment of his at least passive co-operation with them in the deposition of Jehandar Shah (whom he had previously served) and in the exaltation of Farokhsir.

But when they recalled him, and Husain Ali took his place, although no open quarrel followed,

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the seeds of hostility were sown; and though Nizam-ul-Mulk did not oppose the new revolution, which displaced Farokhsir and raised Mohammad Shah to the throne, he was much scandalised at the murder of the unfortunate Emperor; was by no means reconciled to the new régime by his appointment to the Viceroyalty of Malwa; and (as we have seen) both in self-defence against those whom he now considered enemies both of himself and of his class, and incited by the new Emperor and his mother, he marched again into the Dekkan; struck down the lieutenants of the Seiads there; made himself master of the Mogul Provinces south of the Nerbudda; and thus facilitated the counter-revolution in Hindostan which emancipated Mohammad Shah, and resulted in the death of Husain and the defeat and captivity of Abdullah.

Of the three conspirators, the actual murderer of Husain had perished. But the Emperor, now free to choose his ministers, made Itam-u-dowla, the contriver of the plot, his Vizier; and his friend, the third conspirator, Sadut Khan, became Viceroy of Oude, and the founder of the dynasty which came to an end on the eve of the great Sepoy Mutiny in 1857. And Sadut's previous service, together with his vigorous character and conduct, enabled him to root himself so tenaciously in Oude, that it virtually became an independent Principality, like the Dekkan under Nizam-ul-Mulk in the period on

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which we are entering. Thus, in both cases, the revolution that was to restore the vitality of the moribund Empire resulted in its further dismemberment, and reduced it to a shrivelled and attenuated carcass!

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XV

NIZAM-UL-MULK'S POLICY

THE new Vizier did not long survive his elevation. And, on his death, Nizam-ul-Mulk was appointed to succeed him, and returned to the capital, without, however, resigning his Viceroyalty, or giving up the control of the strong places which he had entrusted to his supporters, and which gave him the effective command of the country. At Delhi he did his utmost to act the part of a loyal and efficient Prime Minister. But the youthful, weak, and pleasure-loving Sovereign was under the influence of volatile and vicious companions of his own age, and of a female favourite, who distracted him from all serious application to business, contrived to misappropriate and squander in profligacy the slender resources of the restricted and impoverished Empire, and poisoned the Sovereign's mind against the faithful and sagacious, but severe, free-spoken, and, according to the temper of the Court, ludicrously old-fashioned and exacting Minister. His position not a little resembled that of Clarendon at the Court of Charles II. In vain he tried to rouse

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Mohammad Shah to a sense of his duties, and the personal supervision of public affairs. His remonstrances were irksome, and only provoked dislike and jealousy, and, in the end, fear and enmity.

The Vizier showed no disposition to imitate the unconstitutional and dangerous practice of his predecessors, and, depriving the Emperor of power, to rule arbitrarily in his name. But he saw too clearly that the experiment of restoring him to the position of the older Sovereigns had failed; that Mohammad Shah was unfit for personal rule; and instead of persevering in so uncongenial, mortifying, and hopeless an attempt to galvanise the torpid Sovereign into political vitality, or trying to find a fitter Prince, and plunging anew into direct rebellion, he preferred to resign his office, and, retiring into the Dekkan, to consolidate his own power there, and leave the ill-starred and crumbling Empire to its inevitable fate.

Before he did this, however, he had for the time broken the power of the Jats, and had subdued a refractory Viceroy in Guzerat, and added that province to his own charge, administering it through his uncle, Hamid Khan.

However conscious of his own shortcomings, and of the original fidelity of Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Emperor might well be alarmed at such a monopoly of power by a servant at once so able and so discontented; and he soon began

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to play the old game of intrigue against him. He superseded him in Malwa and Guzerat; but thereby only left these provinces exposed to the incursions of the Mahrattas, who soon after overran, conquered, and annexed them. Indeed, they were already swarming in Guzerat: and Nizam-ul-Mulk, however strongly opposed to the authority of Shao in the Dekkan, or rather to the rising influence of Shao's great Minister, the Peishwa, found his account in leaguing himself with Trimbuk Rao, the *Sena-putti*, or Commander-in-Chief of the Raja in Guzerat, whom he played off successively against the Imperial Viceroy and the Mahratta Peishwa; and thereby promoted the rise of Trimbuk's lieutenant, the ancestor of the Guikwar, who still rules in the same region. I am anticipating the course of my narrative. But I have done so in order to show how, once more, the revolution that overthrew the Seiads, though directed against their Hindooising policy, indirectly led to the establishment of a Hindoo Principality on the ruins of the Imperial power in Guzerat.

I mentioned formerly that Mubariz Khan, the sub-Viceroy of Hyderabad, went over to Nizam-ul-Mulk in his contest with Alam Khan. Mubariz was now secretly stimulated by the Emperor to play a similar part again, and promised that if he succeeded in conquering the too-powerful subject, he should be appointed Subadar of the whole Mogul Dekkan. Mubariz

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threw for the splendid prize; but Nizam-ul-Mulk again triumphed, and, sending the *spolia opima* to the foot of the throne, with bitter irony congratulated Mohammad Shah on the destruction of a rebel, who had, in reality, obeyed his Sovereign not wisely but too well. The hint was, however, taken, and no further attempt was made from Delhi to molest the victor, who was meanwhile otherwise amply occupied in adjusting his relations with the Mahrattas.

However anti-Hindoo in his sentiments as well as his antecedents, and obnoxious to that people, Nizam-ul-Mulk was far too wise and wily a statesman to neglect the signs of the times; and though steadfast in his general aims, his policy varied greatly according to circumstances. He had supported the Emperor, in the hope that he would deserve that support, and act conformably with his position and its obligations. But this not proving to be the case, he had (so to speak) dissolved partnership with him. Yet later, as we shall see, he saw good reason for once more throwing the weight of his influence into the Imperial scale, though with no happier result than before. So he had once fought stoutly to suppress the Mahrattas; and as Vizier at Delhi had even advised the reimposition of the *jizya* throughout the Empire.

But in his second Viceroyalty in the Dekkan he had found that the Mahrattas were far too

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strong to be suppressed, and after Husain Ali's compact with them he had reluctantly acquiesced in their claim to the *chout* and *surdeshmuki*, *i.e.* to the levy of twenty-five per cent. on the land revenue and customs, and ten per cent. on the ryots, or peasantry, in the Mogul Dekkan. A very artful and complicated system of collecting and distributing these dues had been devised by Balaji Wishwanath, the first prominent Peishwa, based on an old and now purely ideal assessment, and subdivided among many chiefs, so that, in the exhausted state of the country, there were constant alleged deficiencies and demands of arrears;—standing grounds for vexatious and oppressive visitations, and eager competition among the chiefs and their followers, each equally bent on promoting the common cause, and making the best bargain for his separate share.

The Peishwa was a Brahmin, from the Concan; and, as the accountants were mostly Brahmins, his influence in the community was greatly enhanced by this subtle and comprehensive scheme for the national aggrandisement.

He was also a soldier, and in that capacity had commanded the Mahratta contingent which accompanied Husain Ali to Delhi, on his march against Farokhsir. He was now dead, but had been succeeded in his office by his son, Baji Rao, a man of remarkable ability and

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gallantry, the greatest of the Peishwas, and a worthy rival of Nizam-ul-Mulk.

But he had a competitor nearer home in Sreeput Rao, the *pirtinidi*, or first minister of the Raja, whereas the Peishwa was, as yet, entitled formally only to the second place.

The Raja, Shao, had never recovered the debilitating effect of his seclusion in the Imperial zenana; but he was still a free agent, and even inclined to appear in the field. Sreeput urged him to consolidate his internal government, and content himself with his share of the revenues of the Dekkan, which he already enjoyed to so large an extent. But Baji Rao advocated a forward policy, as better suited to the character and established practice of the adventurous and predatory people, and recommended further by the enfeebled and discordant condition of Hindostan. The Raja approved of the Peishwa's counsel, and the rather, as the anti-Raja at Kolapore had ceased to be formidable, and was sinking into insignificance.

Nizam-ul-Mulk had formerly, while not denying the right of the Mahrattas to levy the imposts, sought to evade them by professing inability to determine the nice question, whether Shao or his cousin at Kolapore was the true Raja. Such a dilatory plea had now lost much of its force. And he preferred to avail himself of Baji Rao's absence on an expedition beyond the Nerbudda, to conclude an arrangement with

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Sreeput Rao, whereby the demands on his territory were to be estimated once for all, and commuted for a lump sum, to be paid annually by himself, without the vexatious and harrying interposition of the Mahratta tax-gatherers and their armed bands. And he began to remove these obnoxious officials; and when Baji Rao, on his return, condemned the arrangement, and a quarrel ensued between him and Sreeput, the Nizam (as we may henceforth call him) took a higher tone: suspended the payment of the stipulated sum, and again raised the question whether it was properly due to Shao or to his rival at Kolapore.

The Raja was furious, and was with difficulty dissuaded from leading his own forces against the Mogul. In the end, Baji Rao was deputed to wage the war; and his success in the campaign gave him an ascendancy in the State which soon reduced the Raja to a cipher, and advanced the Peishwa far on the way to supremacy in the Mahratta community.

Again, as in Aurungzib's days, the superior numbers and extraordinary agility of the Mahrattas proved more than a match for the Mogul army; brought it to a stand; and hemmed it in on every side. The haughty and wily old soldier was compelled to yield to his young and dashing rival, and to admit the claims which he had questioned. He pledged himself to defray all arrears of what was, in fact, *tribute*,

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and to surrender several strong places as security for the future payment of the *chout* and *surdeshmuki* (1729).

But the Nizam had not played his last card. I have mentioned his alliance with Trimbuk, the *Senaputti*, or Mahratta Commander-in-Chief in Guzerat. Him he now instigated to march into the Dekkan, and rescue the Raja from the ascendancy of the Peishwa and the Brahmin faction, which Baji Rao represented and favoured, proposing to co-operate with him. But Baji Rao, taking a leaf out of Nizam-ul-Mulk's own book, anticipated the junction of his enemies by dashing at and destroying Trimbuk on his march; and this victory, says Grant Duff, left him "all but nominal control of the Mahratta sovereignty" (1731).

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XVI

GROWTH OF THE MAHRATTA CONFEDERACY, AND OF THE PEISHWA'S ASCENDANCY IN IT

THAT is to say, the Raja continues to reign, but he does not rule; the official hierarchy which Sivaji had established, and which had become to a great extent hereditary in certain families, loses most of its consideration, though it is not formally abolished; the Peishwa becomes the leading Minister—in effective power sole Minister—at Satara, though (as we shall see) another determined effort is made to remove him, and to subvert the Brahmin faction, which forms the nucleus of his strength. His lieutenants in turn, Sindia, Holkar, and Puar, disengage themselves from the throng of generals and collectors; become localised in the newly conquered country of Malwa, as minor potentates, actively supporting their patron; and the Guikwar, having already obtained a footing in Guzerat, and another Chief, of the name if not of the lineage of Sivaji, the Bonsla, having been established by the Raja in Berar, has a constant tendency to push on eastward and northward.

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Thus gradually arises the great Mahratta Confederacy, of which, after vindicating his superiority over his older rivals, the Peishwa becomes the acknowledged hegemonic leader, though the utterly passive and imprisoned Raja is still the nominal Sovereign.

In explaining the import of Grant Duff's expression, I have anticipated the course of events to which we must now revert.

Baji Rao's interference in Guzerat had been jealously regarded by Trimbuk, who considered that country his own hunting-ground. And this was one chief cause of his hostility. The Peishwa, however, now thought it politic to heal the breach, and obtained for his enemy's son the father's office of *Senaputti*. But the feud smouldered; and Trimbuk's client, the future Guikwar, who soon eclipsed and virtually superseded the titular *Senaputti*, re-enacted (as we shall see) later his patron's part against Baji Rao's son and successor in the Peishwaship.

Meanwhile, the concessions which the Peishwa had extorted from the Imperial Viceroy in Guzerat mark another distinct step in the advance of the Mahratta dominion, and in the dismemberment of the Empire. The *chout* and *sur-deshmuki* were granted in perpetuity. And this was enough to ensure the whole control of the country's passing into the hands of the ingenious and indefatigable armed tax-gatherers. In vain attempts were made to limit the grant

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to its exact terms, and to prevent abuse and encroachment. In vain the Emperor at first refused to ratify the concession, and superseded the Viceroy who had made it. His successor was equally unsuccessful in removing the wedge, which was steadily splitting up the rotten fabric of the Imperial organisation. Before long, Ahmedabad alone remained to the Moguls; and Ahmedabad itself fell at last to the Mahrattas, and, typifying their complex relations, was occupied partly by the Peishwa's, partly by the Guikwar's troops.

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XVII

PEACE BETWEEN THE NIZAM AND THE PEISHWA, AND CONSEQUENT MAHRATTA PROGRESS IN HINDOSTAN

But another and much more considerable result of Baji Rao's enterprise and Mohammad Shah's fatal feebleness was now to follow. The Nizam and the Peishwa had hitherto been uncompromising enemies, and twice the young Mahratta Brahmin's tactics had foiled his able and veteran adversary. But Baji Rao's position was still critical; he had reason to fear the arts, if not the arms, of the wily political intriguer; and he could not prudently prosecute his great designs in Hindostan while Nizam-ul-Mulk was threatening his base in the Dekkan. The Nizam, on the other hand, had every inducement to seek an accommodation with him. He was anxious to consolidate his own power, and to nurse his resources. He had renounced all hope of maintaining, or rather of restoring, the integrity and independence of the doomed Empire; and he would find his best security against molestation if his still jealous Sovereign, instead of making common cause, as Farokhsir had done under

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similar circumstances, with the Mahrattas against his own Viceroy, and secretly or openly sanctioning an attack by them upon him, were himself to be exposed to the enterprising incursions of the Peishwa. Thus a common interest drew the two competitors together; and they came to an understanding that hostilities between them should cease, and that Baji Rao should be free to push his conquests in the north. The immediate results of this compact were startling and momentous. The Mahrattas poured, like an irresistible torrent, into Malwa; defeated and killed the Imperial Viceroy; and, bearing down all opposition, took forcible possession of the country. Thence they penetrated into Bundelcand; and though gallantly resisted by a force of Rohilla Afghans, and unable to master the warlike and stubborn Boondelas—of Rajput origin—effected a lodgment in the Province, which subsisted to the days of Wellesley.

The imbecile ministers meanwhile took no effectual steps to arrest the course of conquest and assert the majesty of the Empire. They assembled large armies, and made loud professions of an intention to march and exterminate the insolent invaders. But they cared not to come to close quarters with them; and their timid and languid military parades were soon exchanged for a brisk retreat to the capital. They next stooped to negotiation, and were prepared to make abject concessions. Whereupon

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Baji Rao, trading on their fears, rose in his terms, and made demands which even such negotiators could not venture to entertain. Then the Mahrattas pushed on to the neighbourhood of the capital. But Sadut Ali, the surviving conspirator against the Seiads, and now Subadar of Oude, again struck a bold blow for the honour of his Sovereign, and the defence of the heart of the Mogul Empire against Hindoo aggression. Leaving his own province, he crossed the Ganges, engaged and repulsed the Mahrattas, and drove them out of the Doab. He was preparing to follow up his success, when an imperious message from Delhi enjoined him to await the junction of one of the very ministers who had already so conspicuously failed to check the Peishwa's growing audacity. While Sadut Ali tarried reluctantly, in obedience to this order, the nimble enemy, recovering courage when they found themselves unpursued, returned; wheeled round his flank; and, headed by Baji Rao in person, suddenly appeared before Delhi, and inspired there extreme terror. But he did not attack the city, and even refrained from plundering the suburbs. Whereupon a body of Imperialists took heart, and sallied out against him, but were soon repulsed by Holkar, Sindia, and other lieutenants of the Peishwa. Having extorted an ignoble promise from the Emperor, or his Minister, that the government of Malwa should be conferred on him, he retired,

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on the approach of Sadut Khan and the Imperial army which had joined that Viceroy, and returned for the time to the Dekkan (1736).

This brilliant campaign was followed by one still more decisive. The Emperor, after all that had occurred to estrange Nizam-ul-Mulk, conceived the hope of re-enlisting him as his champion against the Mahrattas, and summoned him to his aid.

The old soldier of Aurungzib in the Mahratta War of Independence, the statesman who had striven to liberate his Sovereign from the yoke of Hindooising ministers, the standing rival of Baji Rao in the Dekkan, could not be insensible to the appeal. And he was probably seriously alarmed, on personal grounds, at the rapid success of the Mahratta arms, and the extravagant pretensions of the Peishwa in the late negotiation. He repaired to Delhi, and was entrusted with the amplest authority for levying forces. But though the Rajputs joined him in considerable numbers, and he was very strong in artillery, he could only muster half as many men as the Peishwa. He was also enfeebled by age; and, knowing too well the wonderful agility and terrible impetuosity of the Mahratta cavalry, he resorted to the precaution of at once entrenching his position; which, as a sign of fear and a confession of inferiority, greatly elated his enemies, and made them more audacious than ever. In short, the course of his

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former contest with Baji Rao was repeated. His movements were carefully watched and anticipated. His convoys were cut off; his foragers intercepted; provisions became scarce in his camp; his march was obstructed; and at last, near Bhopal, he was fairly blocked up, and compelled to enter into a convention equally ignominious to himself and his royal master. He had been re-appointed Viceroy of Malwa. But now, so far from being able to take up that appointment, he was obliged to promise "in his own hand-writing to grant to Baji Rao the whole of Malwa, and the complete sovereignty of the territory between the Nerbuddha and the Chumbul; to obtain a confirmation of this cession from the Emperor; and to use every endeavour to procure the payment of fifty lacs of rupees, to defray the Peishwa's expenses." [1]

Thus not only had the Dekkan previously been cut off irretrievably from the Empire, but the Mahratta power, already established *de facto*, was now to be *de jure* also in Hindostan, and at easy striking distance from Agra and Delhi.

Such were the fruits of the Emperor's self-indulgence, and the recklessness and incapacity of his ministers, in the past. The whole South was lost. But, as if infatuated, and foredoomed to destroy what remained, they were at this

[1] Grant Duff, i. 341.

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very time engaged in displaying the same qualities in another direction, and thereby inviting —nay provoking—attack from a still more formidable and ruthless conqueror in the north.

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XVIII

NADIR SHAH'S INVASION

THE native author of the *Siyar-ul-Mutakherin* traces very clearly, in much detail, and with appropriate indignation and scorn, how the corruption, short-sightedness, and obstinate disregard of significant and successive warnings, and of the most obvious precautions, led to the awful catastrophe which placed the Emperor at the mercy of a foreign invader; deluged the proud capital in the blood of its citizens; despoiled it of untold treasure; rent away for ever three northern provinces; and, divesting the central authority of such respect as it had hitherto retained, precipitated the final and complete dissolution of the Empire.

Nadir Shah was a Persian of low origin, a soldier of fortune, whose early career was stained with many dark deeds; but a man of extraordinary ability, both military and political, of great ambition, indomitable energy, and fiery valour, but cold-hearted, stern, pitiless, and unscrupulous. In the year 1722, Persia had been invaded and the capital and much of the country conquered, by the Western

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Afghans, under a leader who captured the Shah and assumed the throne. He was, however, too weak to complete his conquest; and after his death, two years later, his relative and successor, Ashraff, was threatened by a combination of Peter the Great and the Turkish Sultan, who proposed to treat Persia as Poland was afterwards treated. But the Shah's son, Prince Tamasp, had escaped; and, taking Nadir into his service, made successful head against his various enemies. Peter the Great died; the Russians were checked, and a peace was concluded with them. The Turks were signally defeated; the Afghans were routed and expelled; and the whole country was gradually recovered. But the young Prince was restored to the throne of his fathers only to be promptly superseded by his perfidious deliverer, who, after thoroughly organising the national forces, and compelling the Persians to adopt the *Sunnee* formula,—such was his extraordinary ascendancy over them,—entered on a career of foreign conquest; retaliated on the Western Afghans the evils they had inflicted on Persia; subdued and occupied the Mogul Province of Cabul; crossed the Attok, and invaded the Punjab, bent upon marching to Delhi, and exacting satisfaction for alleged injuries which he exaggerated, but also for insults and supercilious treatment on the part of the imbecile Emperor and his reckless

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ministers, of which he had too good reason to complain.

Nadir's severe handling of the Afghan intruders had scattered them in all directions. A complete stampede took place; and swarms of them poured into the Cabul Province, and through that into India.

I may mention incidentally that the most notable of these were the Rohilla Afghans, Macaulay's interesting clients, the alleged peaceful, industrious, and poetical victims of Warren Hastings's unscrupulous policy; but who were really in every respect much the reverse.

The Mogul Government, in its better days, had adopted systematic precautions to secure this critical frontier region: able Viceroys had been employed in Cabul; a strong force had been stationed there; the wild tribes in the hills overhanging the defiles, through which enemies or questionable immigrants might penetrate into India, had been regularly subsidised, to give timely notice of their approach, and to dispute their progress; and a constant and brisk communication of political intelligence had been maintained between Cabul and the Mogul capital.

But, of late years, all this had been neglected. Jobbery, corruption, and carelessness, which had already laid open Guzerat and Malwa to the Mahrattas, now exposed Northern India to Nadir's attack, as well as to its pretext, the

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harbouring of his enemies. Incapable Viceroys were appointed by favouritism; the garrisons, says the author of the *Seir Mutaquerin*, were "totally neglected"; the tribal subsidies were withheld, to swell the illicit gains of those in power, or their dependants; and the frivolous Sovereign and his like-minded ministers heard little, and cared less, about what was going on beyond the mountains.

Nadir sent message after message, complaining, with growing urgency and imperiousness, of the shelter afforded to his foes by the Indian Government. But his power was underrated; his applications remained unanswered; his messengers were detained on futile grounds; and at last a party, escorting a fresh and more imperative emissary, was attacked and cut off at Jelalabad by the Emperor's subjects. Nadir, who had already occupied Cabul for some months, on learning this cruel deed from the sole survivor, instantly marched on the place, and massacred all its inhabitants. He thence advanced to Peshawur, where the Viceroy of Cabul, who had been characteristically out of the way when the Persian overran his province, made a feeble stand against him, but was captured; and Nadir, says the native historian, "having put to the sword every one that attempted to stand before him, whether Indian or Afghan," swept on, in his irresistible course; crossed the Attok in boats, and routed with the

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greatest ease the Viceroy of Lahore, who immediately afterwards tendered his submission, and, like his colleague of Cabul, was graciously treated, and led in the conqueror's train, on his rapid march to Delhi.

The Emperor, with Khan Douran, the Ameer-ul-Omra, or Head of the Peerage (who together with the Vizier was responsible for the maladministration), marched from the capital, at the head of a considerable army, to confront the invader. Nizam-ul-Mulk was also in camp, and Sadut Khan joined soon after, with his own forces. Vain attempts were made to raise the Rajputs; and this failure seems to have much disheartened the already craven-hearted Imperialists; and, advancing very slowly, they came to a stand at four days' march from Delhi. Many circumstances disclose the wretched state of military organisation among them. Thus they had no exact knowledge of the enemy's whereabouts until Nadir's advanced guard fell upon Sadut Khan's baggage train. And the discordant counsels and separate action in the engagement that followed show the utter want of a general plan and a commanding and authoritative mind. Sadut hastened to succour his own followers; Nizam-ul-Mulk insisted that the day was too far spent for fighting; Khan Douran, displaying unwonted spirit, inveighed against the ignominy of leaving Sadut unsupported, and led a body of

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troops to his assistance. This body was quickly routed; and the Ameer-ul-Omra was mortally wounded, and was rescued only to die. Sadut Khan's men fought better, but shared the fate of their comrades; and Sadut himself was taken prisoner, and, like the other captured Viceroys, was well received by the victor. A negotiation followed, set on foot by the Viceroy of Oude, and concluded by Nizam-ul-Mulk; and Nadir agreed to retire, on payment of two crores of rupees. The Emperor then visited him, and received the highest honour. The grim conqueror was all smiles and deference. But the end was not yet!

It is not easy to account for the caprices of such a man. But the native historian states confidently that Sadut—jealous of the Emperor's having conferred the vacant office of Ameer-ul-Omra, which he coveted, on Nizam-ul-Mulk—incited Nadir to persevere in marching to Delhi, and rifling its ample wealth. It is more probable that Nadir had been acting a part, and that this had been all along his intention. However that may have been, certain it is that the Persian suddenly changed his tone; insisted on Mohammad Shah's again visiting his camp, with his family and officials; and that the helpless monarch obeyed the summons, and was led in a sort of triumph to his own capital (1739).

There, though Nadir's strict discipline maintained perfect order in his army of occupation,

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a course of systematic and cold-blooded spoliation took place. The Imperial Court was stripped of its splendid appliances, including the world-renowned Peacock Throne, which was profusely decorated with magnificent jewels, the value of the whole being estimated by Tavernier, himself a jeweller, at six millions sterling; the nobles and other rich men were compelled to disgorge their accumulated wealth; the citizens generally were laid under heavy contribution; and the Provinces did not escape the rigorous application of the principle: *Væ Victis!* Terror, dejection, and shame sat on every countenance, from Mohammad Shah in his palace to the meanest subject in his hovel. And Nadir's ascendancy was emphatically asserted by the *kutba* being read in his name in the mosques, *i.e.* his being recognised as supreme in the Moslem Bidding Prayer.

But a far darker and more tragic scene was to succeed this spectacle of imperial and national humiliation. The ardent wish being father to the thought, a fatal report was spread in the city that Nadir had suddenly died. A popular rising, acquiesced in, if not excited, by the higher classes, instantly took place. Seven hundred of Nadir's soldiers were slaughtered in the streets during the night. After vainly trying, by showing himself, to quell the tumult, the justly exasperated conqueror gave loose to his fury, and ordered a general massacre, wherever

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the body of a slain Afghan should be found. His orders were obeyed with terrific alacrity. The number of the victims was never accurately ascertained; but it was certainly enormous. Houses were sacked in all directions; the horrors and crimes—worse than death—usual on such occasions were perpetrated; fire added its terrors to the scene; and a great part of the city was consumed. At midday Mohammad Shah interceded for mercy to his unhappy subjects; Nadir then relented, and—such was his discipline—the avenging swords were instantly sheathed.

After this *coup de grâce* to the majesty of the Empire, the conqueror lingered a while in the devastated and blood-stained capital; married his second son, who had accompanied him, to one of the Imperial Princesses; formally reinstated Mohammad Shah in his degraded sovereignty; gave him much advice, and exhorted his subjects to obey him, with severe threats if his injunctions should not be complied with; collected his vast spoil; and, at the head of his victorious army, conveyed it to Persia. But he did not long survive his triumph. Intoxicated with success, he gave loose to his passions, became hideously cruel, and at last mad, and not less hateful as a tyrant than he had once been popular as the deliverer of his country from the yoke of foreigners. And his strange and wild career was cut short by assassination (1747).

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XIX

CULMINATING PERIOD OF MAHRATTA ASCENDANCY IN NATIVE INDIA

THE political outlook in India was now most gloomy and perplexing. The strong Government that had formerly maintained order throughout the greater part of the country was no more. The actual dominions of the Emperor had shrunk to the neighbourhood of the capital, and even over these the feeble and utterly discredited Mogul retained only a precarious and relaxing grasp. The Hindoo reaction, stimulated by Nadir's prostration of the Mahometan authority, seemed destined to go on absorbing revenue, and annexing territory, until it should become the supreme disposer of the fate of the country, in which Mussulman rule had been predominant for so many centuries. But, to say nothing of Sikh fanaticism and Jat lawlessness, the prospect of Mahratta ascendancy was by no means hopeful for the welfare of India. In the work of political destruction, marauding, and financial extortion and assessment, Sivaji's people were unrivalled. But it remained very questionable whether

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they were capable of reconstructing a regular and tolerable scheme of civil government. And failing this, constant warfare, general anarchy, and the extreme social misery that these involve, seemed the inevitable alternative. And the course of events soon after tended to confirm such dismal forebodings. This I will illustrate by glancing summarily at the progress of the Mahratta power in the coming years, before recounting events in more detail.

Sadut Khan, who had conspired to overthrow the Seiads, remove the Hindoo influence in the administration, liberate the Emperor, and restore the political ascendancy of the Mogul party; who had recently defeated Holkar in the Doab, and fought stoutly, though unsuccessfully, against Nadir Shah, died before that conqueror retired from Delhi. Nizam-ul-Mulk, after his late failure against the Peishwa, had cut a rather poor figure in the campaign against the Persian,—while Baji Rao's reputation was at its height, and his forces were intact. Might it not be possible, while the Nizam still lingered at Delhi, to give another signal triumph to the Mahratta arms, by conquering his territory in the Dekkan? Such was Baji Rao's calculation. A pretext was readily found in the withholding of the stipulated grant of the government of Malwa. But the attempt miscarried through the unexpected energy of Nazir Jung, the Nizam's eldest son. And Baji Rao

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died soon afterwards (1740). But before his death he had organised a great expedition in a new direction, and at the same time had familiarised the community with the idea of the Peishwa's general control over its operations. He had concerted an invasion of the Carnatic, and constituted his rival, Rugoji Bonsla, of Berar, generalissimo of the invading army. (Tanjore, in the same region, it must be remembered, was already under Mahratta rule, its Raja being a collateral descendant of Sivaji.) Distant Mysore too, under its Hindoo Raja, was about this time first laid under contribution by the Mahrattas. Soon after Baji Rao's death, the same people, under Rugoji, the Raja (as we may now call him) of Berar, invaded the eastern provinces of the Empire, Bengal, Behar, and Orissa, or Cuttak, which had hitherto escaped their incursions. And though they were bravely encountered there, and worsted both by arms and by perfidious stratagem, they returned indefatigably, and in the end effected a compromise, which involved both a territorial cession and the payment of tribute to the Bonsla.

The new Peishwa, Balaji Baji Rao, though less distinguished than his father in war, gave full—indeed dangerous—scope to the national propensity. His brother, Rugonath Rao, levied exactions in Rajputana, and even on the Jats; took part in another dynastic revolution at Delhi; and waging a rash war in the Punjab,

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precipitated another Mussulman invasion of India, destined to be as fatal to Mahratta preponderance as Nadir's had been to Mogul ascendancy. Jeiapa Sindia meanwhile overran the Rohilla country, and was involved in hostilities with Sadut Khan's successor in Oude. The Peishwa's uncle, Chimnaji, accomplished the proud feat of taking Bassein from the Portuguese, and threatened Goa itself. Again, but for French help, the old dream of conquering the Nizam's territory would have been accomplished by the Mahrattas; and the Berar Raja actually annexed a portion of it, and the audacious freebooters made a raid across the hills into the French *jaghire* on the Eastern Coast.

Thus it might seem that the Mahrattas, though frequently driven back for a time, were destined to prevail everywhere in the end; that, obeying as it were a natural law, the great flood of predatory power, which had been running for a century in ever-widening volume and circuit, was appointed to rise still higher; and, overleaping all barriers, to submerge the whole Indian Continent. In such a case, what but general havoc and misery could be the result?

It was a melancholy prospect, not only for the fallen but still proud Mogul noble, but for the peaceable and would-be industrious Hindoo peasant, and the timid and thrifty tradesman and native merchant. So utterly had the old

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political organisation broken down, that in many parts of the country, but for the village communities, society itself must have perished. But the night is darkest before the dawning. And already the dawn of a better day was breaking, though in turbulence and the tempest of warfare on the Coromandel Coast; and Wellesley's inscription on Fort William College —*Ex Oriente Lux*— was to have a political application.

I must now fill up the details of this summary sketch of the expansion of the Mahratta power.

On the death of Baji Rao, and for some time afterwards, it seemed not improbable that that power might be dissolved, so violent were the rivalries and internal dissensions among its leading members. Rugoji ran an opposition candidate to Balaji, Baji Rao's son, for the Peishwaship. But the attempt failed; and the hereditary right to the office was thenceforth undisputed. The Raja Shao, however, was childless; and this led to fresh troubles. He was disposed to adopt his Kolapore cousin, the anti-Raja, and so heal the schism; but his cousin was also childless. Sukwar Bhye, Shao's wife, wished him to adopt an heir from a more remote branch of the family, hoping to become Regent to a minor, and thus oust the Peishwa from his growing ascendancy. But, to conceal her ambitious design, she gave hints of her intention to become *suttee*, on her husband's

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death. Balaji, with characteristic Brahmin craft and cold-blooded cruelty, taunted her with this alleged intention, and drove her unwillingly to immolate herself, thus ridding himself of one rival. But he had still a more formidable one in Tara Bhye, the widow of Ram Raja, Sivaji's second son, after whose death she had assumed the Regency on behalf of Ram Raja's and her young son, the second Sivaji, and had (as I related) ably sustained the war of independence against Aurungzib. And popular feeling was strongly in favour of her present claim to occupy the same position. Moreover, she enlisted the sympathies of all who were averse to the Brahmin ascendancy; and this included both the party of Trimbuk, who had perished in the same cause, and whose son was now in the guardianship of Dunnaji Guikwar, and Dunnaji himself, who was fast overshadowing the titular authority of the *Senaputti*.

Tara Bhye's pretensions were grounded not only on her past services to the community, but on the fact that she told a singular story, which, however suspicious, may have been true, and was accepted at the moment. She asserted that Sivaji II. had had a son, whom she had concealed, and brought up privately; and she identified him with a youth whom she now produced, and who, in fact, became Shao's successor. In the first instance, Balaji found it convenient to acquiesce in this tale, as a counter-

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poise to Sukwar Bhye's plan of the adoption of a stranger. But he thus laid himself open to Tara's ambition of ruling in her alleged grandson's name. By his precautions against this danger, he not only staved it off for the time, but established the authority of the Peishwa on a more regular and explicit basis than it had hitherto occupied. By a strong display of force, he overawed those who were ready to declare on Tara's behalf on the death of Shao. He conciliated Tara herself by promising to share the government with her, though with no intention of doing so. He bribed the other chiefs by causing the Raja to confirm and enlarge their territorial possessions and fiscal rights. And he procured from him a document which empowered him, says Grant Duff, "to manage the whole government of the Mahratta Empire, on condition of his perpetuating the Raja's name, and keeping up the dignity of the house of Sivajee, through the grandson of Tara Bhye and his descendants" (ii. 35). Thus the Peishwa's leadership received a constitutional sanction; the doubtful lineage, as well as the feeble character, of the new Raja made him passive in the hands of his Mayor of the Palace; he vegetated in strict seclusion at Satara; while Poona, the Peishwa's residence, became the military and political capital of the State. By the measures now adopted (1750), the Mahratta power was in fact converted into a confederacy of

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chiefs, permanently and avowedly presided over by the Peishwa, as an almost sovereign Prince—loosely and grudgingly obeyed indeed, but far more distinctly recognised as supreme on his own account, than he had previously been; while the Raja retired into unapproachable and inactive isolation.

This political arrangement, however, was not finally established without another desperate attempt to frustrate it. When, in the following year, Balaji marched against the new Nizam, Salabat Jung, Tara Bhye invited the Guikwar Dunnaji, as Nizam-ul-Mulk had invited Trimbuk Rao—to join her from Guzerat, and co-operate in overthrowing the Brahmin Peishwa. He complied, and joined her at Satara, where she had vainly tried to rouse the young Raja in the same cause. She there shut him up closely, rated him soundly, and declared him spurious, no doubt intending to adopt a more compliant tool. But Balaji returned by forced marches; entrapped the Guikwar into his power by a perfidious stratagem; and, shrinking from a direct attack upon Tara, came to a compromise with her, allowing her to command in the fort of Satara, and retain the custody of her naughty boy, which—as the Peishwa recommended her to release him—she took care should be strict. The Guikwar was not liberated until he had solemnly agreed "to accept the Peishwa's lead, and to yield permanently

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the right to half the revenues of Guzerat, and to fulfil other stringent stipulations." Thus Balaji triumphed; but his perfidy was not forgotten. The Bonsla's jealousy of the Peishwa's power was aggravated by another circumstance. Balaji, anxious to procure the long-deferred Imperial *sunnud* for the government of Malwa, secured it at last, on condition of restraining the Mahrattas from attacking the remaining provinces of the Empire. And, in pursuance of this engagement, he actually co-operated (as I shall describe later) against Rugoji, when the latter invaded Bengal. But not long afterwards, the Peishwa again followed Nizam-ul-Mulk's example, and entered into a secret compact with his rival, whereby Rugoji was left free to prosecute his designs on the Bengal Provinces, on condition of leaving the Peishwa undisturbed. Thenceforth their relations were peaceable, though not cordial. And the Bonsla took no part in the Paniput Campaign.

Moorar Rao also, the descendant of the murdered Santaji Ghorepuray, the hero of the War of Independence, was reconciled by Balaji to the national association, and joined in the Carnatic expedition already referred to. Sindia and Holkar were settled in Malwa, under the patronage of the Peishwa, and on excellent terms with him. Thus, on the whole, the imminent danger of the disruption of the

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Mahratta power by internal dissension was avoided; the Confederacy waxed stronger by the aggrandisement of its several members; and rapidly attained the culminating stage of its progress on the eve of its experiencing a terrific disaster, which, for the time, paralysed it, and from which—*as a whole*—it never recovered.

Though the Peishwa's *legati*, Sindia and Holkar, were cantoned in Malwa, where Oojein and Indore became their respective capitals, the Emperor had not formally ratified the concession of its government to Baji Rao, as Nizam-ul-Mulk had promised in his name. But Mohammad Shah at length granted this, in consideration of the assistance which, as I have said, was to be afforded against Mahratta invasions, and which was rendered to Aliverdi Khan (1743). With a poor attempt to save his dignity and evade the explicit recognition of the rising Mahratta polity, the Emperor professed to make Balaji the deputy of his own heir apparent, Prince Ahmed, and imposed conditions, which were not likely to be too scrupulously observed, especially the one I have mentioned, which was soon after ignored, when the Peishwa and Rugoji came to the accommodation I have specified. Moreover, as the levying of *chout* and *sur-deshmuki* was invariably a preliminary step to conquest and annexation, we may almost say that Mohammad Shah dis-

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solved his empire with his own hand, when, about the same time, he granted to the Mahrattas the *chout* in all the remaining provinces. This donation does not seem to have been reduced to writing with due formality; but those to whom it was made took good care that it should be known, and acted upon.

Dupleix's policy was now in the ascendant; and the new Nizam, Salabat Jung, was supported by Bussy. Thus, when the Peishwa, after disposing of his domestic rivals, resumed his campaign against Salabat, he was hard pressed, compelled to retreat, and to witness the devastation of his own country, and to tremble for his capital, Poona. But this reverse only illustrated the policy of his late compact with the Bonsla, and the potency of the Confederation which he had established among the Mahratta Chiefs. While others were hastening to his assistance from the north, Rugoji himself created a formidable diversion in his favour. "He surprised," says Grant Duff, "and took Gawelgurh and Nurnallah, made himself master of Manikdroog, occupied the districts dependent on those forts, and . . . not only laid the whole country between the Payn Gunga and the Godavery under contribution, but drove out the Mogul thannas, and established his own" (ii. 55, 56). The Peishwa meanwhile cleverly promoted by his intrigues internal dissension among his enemies, and jealousy of the French;

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and thus Salabat was fain to make peace, with the loss of the territory occupied by the Bonsla (1752).

Sindia and Holkar meanwhile had been giving equally good proof of the ubiquitous activity of their people, and of the consideration shown to it by the Moguls. Safder Jung, Viceroy of Oude, had called them in against the Afghan Rohillas, whom they had defeated, and driven into the Kumayoon mountains. This service was acknowledged by a large grant of the conquered territory; and although, bent on other projects, they evacuated the country soon after, it was not without obtaining fifty lacs of rupees as the price of their retirement. And they soon returned to triumph on a wider field in Hindostan, though that triumph was but the prelude to the catastrophe which shortly overwhelmed themselves and their patron.

For the present, however, we must return to the Dekkan, where the fortunes of the Mahrattas are materially influenced by the Seven Years' War in Europe, and the consequent struggle between the English and the French on the Coromandel Coast. Count Lally, on his landing in India, lost no time in recalling Bussy to the Carnatic, and dissolving the French connexion with the Nizam. And the victorious English, though they allied themselves with Salabat, evaded the obligation of defending him. So formidable at this time was

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the Peishwa's power, that, to their disgust, he levied *chout* from Mahomet Ali, their own Nawab of the Carnatic. He also invaded the as yet Hindoo State of Mysore, besieged its capital, occupied several districts, and, on one occasion, extorted from its ruler thirty-two lacs of rupees or pagodas. But on the same occasion Hyder Ali, who was rising into power in Mysore, distinguished himself by his brilliant services against an enemy hitherto thought invincible.

On the opposite side of the peninsula Bednore was invaded, and the Peishwa's forces co-operated with the English, under Clive and Watson, in reducing the pirate, Angria. He also concluded a treaty with the Bombay Government, and through that medium twice transmitted letters to the King of England.

While thus exerting his energies, and directing his views, so variously and remotely, it will be readily conceived that Balaji was not inclined to forego the opportunity of assailing his old rival and immediate neighbour, the Nizam, now no longer buttressed by European aid. The Peishwa, as I have said, rarely appeared personally in the field. But his brother, Rugonath Rao, had been pursuing an adventurous course in the north, which was not approved by their cousin, Sedasheo—or "the Bhow," as he was commonly called. A quarrel ensued, and ended in Rugonath's scornfully resigning the command of the army to the Bhow,

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who had hitherto conducted the civil administration, but was now fired with the ambition of distinguishing himself in war. As this ambition drove him to the fatal field of Paniput, it will be necessary later to compare him with his great adversary, Ahmed Shah Abdali, and to show how his character and tactics contributed to his overthrow. But it will be enough at present to account more summarily for the immediate and signal success of his campaign against a more familiar and weaker antagonist. He was the son of Chimnajee Appa, the able brother of the late Peishwa, Baji Rao, who had prosecuted to a successful issue the long siege of Bassein (1739). This triumph over Europeans, and especially in a branch of warfare in which Orientals are generally so unskilful, was not only an occasion of great elation to the Mahrattas, but seems to have permanently prejudiced the conqueror's son, the Bhow, in favour of a fundamental change in the national armament and style of warfare. Hitherto, the great Mahratta arm had been cavalry. The Bhow was inclined to rely henceforth much on regular infantry, and especially on artillery. And, fortunately for his immediate object, he secured the services of a clever and experienced artillerist, Ibrahim Khan Gardee, who had been trained under Bussy in the Nizam's army, but who now took service with the Mahrattas.

The Nizam also was strong in guns, but

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they were old-fashioned lumbering cannon; while Ibrahim furnished a good train of the light and mobile field-pieces which the French had introduced, and which had been one of the most important factors of their success. The Bhow had also at his disposal the very numerous and as yet unimpaired hosts of cavalry, so long accustomed to triumph over the Moguls in the Dekkan.

Salabat, deserted by the French, and unsupported by the English, had already fallen under the influence of his brother, Nizam Ali, who soon after supplanted him. The Bhow, by intrigue, procured the surrender of Ahmednuggur. The brothers marched to recover it. But the vast force of Mahratta cavalry, as so often before, surrounded their army, and brought it to a stand. Their heavy guns of position were no match for Ibrahim's easily manœuvred and swiftly discharged field-pieces. And, after a vain struggle in the toils, they were summoned to surrender at discretion. Though this was refused in form, it may be said to have been yielded in substance. For Salabat sent to the Bhow his seal of state, thus leaving to the victor the dictation of terms. They were not only hard and humiliating, but virtually concluded (for the present at least) the long rivalry between the houses, by transferring to the Mahratta a very large part of the dominions of his opponent. The whole province of Bijapur, almost the whole of that of Aurungabad, and part of

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Beder, together with the famous and impregnable fortress of Dowlutabad — and others destined to become famous in our later wars with the victors on this occasion, were conceded unreservedly (1760).

Sedasheo Bhow might well be proud of such an opening of his warlike career. But there can be no doubt that this easy and complete success threw him off his guard, and led him to underrate the difficulties of the war in Hindostan, to which he had pledged himself, and which was to be conducted against a very different foe.

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XX

ALIVERDI KHAN

ngal Provinces had been exempted from the earlier incursions of the Mahrattas into Hindostan, though their fertility and consequent wealth were a strong inducement to the inveterate spoilers. But when the Raja of Berar, otherwise called the Bonsla, emulous of his rival, the Peishwa, began to push his way eastward, it was not long before he was attracted by so promising a field for his enterprise; though there he found an antagonist very different from the poor-spirited Emperor and his imbecile favourites, and more determined and successful in his resistance than Nizam-ul-Mulk himself. The result was a long, obstinate, and desperate struggle, which ended in a compromise, indicative of the inability of the Mogul champion to throw off the yoke of the Hindoo reactionist, and which indicates the culminating period of Mahratta ascendancy.

The three eastern provinces, Behar, Bengal proper, and Orissa, had been massed into one Viceroyalty under an able ruler, Shuja-u-Dowla, who died in 1738. He was succeeded by his

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son, Serfiraz Khan, a very inferior man. Shuja had been zealously served by two brothers, soldiers of fortune, Mahummud Ali and Haji Hamud; and the former became Sub-Viceroy of Behar under Serfiraz. But on a rather complicated quarrel, which I need not now stop to disentangle, the brothers rose against the new Viceroy, and destroyed him (1739). Mahummud Ali then petitioned the Emperor to ratify the decision of the sword, and to confer the Viceroyalty of the three provinces on himself. And as he backed the petition with a large part of Serfiraz's treasures, and the Emperor, just after Nadir Shah's departure, was in no condition to disoblige so powerful a suppliant, the request was granted. Henceforth, Mahummud Ali figures as Aliverdi Khan. I may add that he soon after quarrelled with his brother, who retired into private life. But his two sons were actively employed by their uncle, who had no sons of his own, and Hybut, one of these nephews, was married to a daughter of Aliverdi. The other, Said Ahmed Khan, Aliverdi appointed Governor of Cuttak. But an insurrection soon broke out there; Said Ahmed was made prisoner, and handed over to Baukir Khan, a relative of Serfiraz.

Aliverdi lost no time in marching to his nephew's rescue; routed Baukir; delivered his nephew; appointed another Governor in the disturbed district; and was making his way

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homewards, when he was called upon to do battle with a new and more formidable enemy.

Bhaskir Pundit, a general of the Bonsla, Rugoji, pursued him with 40,000 cavalry. After some fighting, he offered to retire, on payment of ten lacs. Aliverdi's army was not more than 5000 effectives; he was encumbered with a large number of helpless and obstructive fugitives from the Mahratta inroad; and the already very high reputation of the enemy had been enhanced by their recent triumph over Nizam-ul-Mulk. But Aliverdi scorned submission, and fought his way gallantly, though with severe loss, to Cutwa, where his nephew joined him with reinforcements. Then, under Meer Hubeeb, a deserter from his own service, a Mahratta party tried to capture his capital, Moorshedabad. But he saved it by a forced march. The enemy, however, overran the whole country westward of the Ganges, during the rains. But, taking them by surprise, he put them to flight, and drove them into the difficult country on the south. They turned up again in Cuttak; again he routed them, and they retreated homewards.

This spirited conduct excited great interest at Delhi; and the Emperor recognised it by honorary gifts.

But Rugoji himself now repeated the invasion. And, on the Emperor's summons, Balaji, the new Peishwa, co-operated with Ali-

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verdi in resisting it. Thus Mahratta met Mahratta in the tug-of-war—or rather, in a pursuit too fleet for Aliverdi to keep up with it. Rugoji was fain to evacuate Behar; and Balaji's service on this occasion was (as I have mentioned) rendered in consideration of the grant of the Viceroyalty of Malwa (1743).

Next year, however, Bhaskir reappeared, and again offered to retire on payment of a large sum. Aliverdi had no scruples in dealing with such a social pest; and the overture enabled him to employ negotiation to entrap his enemies. He arranged an interview with Bhaskir and his principal officers, and murdered them all. Then he fell upon and routed their army, and thus foiled the third invasion.

The Mahrattas, great as was their intrinsic strength, and especially the extraordinary marching power of their irregular and hardy cavalry, had almost invariably been much favoured by the division of counsels and dissensions in the Empire. Aliverdi was not, like Nizam-ul-Mulk and Husain Ali before him, intrigued against and hampered by the Court of Delhi. On the contrary, Mohammad Shah's feeling towards him seems to have been friendly throughout; though he had some reason to fear the designs of Safder Jung, Sadut's successor in the Oude Viceroyalty. But, on the other hand, his raw and forcibly established authority was exposed to constant and extreme

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danger from internal disturbances, arising from the circumstances of his position as a military adventurer, and the character of the instruments whom he was constrained to employ. The inhabitants of Bengal are notoriously most unwarlike. But this was not the case with the other parts of his dominions. And Northern India at the time swarmed with the fierce Afghan soldiery, whom Nadir had expelled from Persia and their own country, and whose settlement in India had been the original pretext of his invasion. These men, arrogant, brutal, treacherous, and insubordinate, could only be kept in good temper by lavish indulgence of their greedy disposition. They resented Aliverdi's strict discipline. They had no sympathy with his desire to husband the resources of the country, and to improve its civil administration. Bent upon this, and cramped by constant military requirements, Aliverdi was unable to gratify their insatiable appetites, or even to fulfil the expectations which he had led them to entertain as the reward of their services in the field. Hence they were ever ready to join in disturbances, to break out into rebellion against him, and to become tools of leaders as unprincipled as themselves, and ambitious to repeat the subversive part which Aliverdi had played against Serfiraz. And what made the long and stout resistance which he offered to the Mahratta

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advance the more remarkable, was that it was conducted in spite of this frequent and most serious danger from within.

Thus, no sooner had Bhaskir Pundit and his army been disposed of, than Mustapha Khan, Aliverdi's right-hand man, availed himself of this military discontent, and demanded to be made Governor of Behar. This was in the hands of Hybut, Aliverdi's nephew and son-in-law, and the demand was rejected. Hence a quarrel, which ended in the dismissal of Mustapha, who marched off with a large force of his own veterans, and attempted to conquer Behar on his own account. Twice Hybut rashly encountered him with an inferior army; twice circumstances enabled him to avoid an actual defeat; and, on Aliverdi's advance, Mustapha retreated. He was actively pursued by the combined forces, and compelled to retire into Oude. But when Aliverdi had departed to meet once more his old enemies, the Mahrattas, Mustapha again invaded Behar, fought another battle with Hybut, and was defeated and slain.

Rugoji, indignant at the fate of Bhaskir and his officers, and encouraged by Aliverdi's preoccupation with the rebels, for a fourth time renewed the incursion. Again he was arrested for awhile by plausible negotiations; when hostilities were resumed, his rapidity at first baffled his opponent. But he was presently brought to bay, and sustained several defeats, in

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one of which he was nearly taken prisoner. Again, too, Moorshedabad was saved from his attack; he was defeated again at Cutwa; and he was forced to retreat (1745). Cuttak, however, he still retained, through Meer Hubeeb, who commanded a joint force of Mahrattas and Afghans.

The last circumstance was ominous. And the omen was soon fulfilled. Aliverdi in vain tried to expel the enemy from Cuttak; and in the course of these operations was obliged to cashier two officers who had shown symptoms of treachery. One of them, Meer Jaffier, was afterwards the English Nawab of the Bengal Provinces. A third attempt to reach Moorshedabad was made by Janoji, Rugoji's eldest son. But again, Aliverdi was too active, and saved his capital.

But he now incurred the greatest danger to which he was ever exposed. For suspected complicity with Rugoji he had dismissed two other chief officers, Afghans, Shumsur Khan and Sirdar Khan, but had rashly allowed them to settle with their numerous followers in Behar. That province already teemed with the old soldiers of the defunct rebel, Mustapha. And the attraction of a common cause of disaffection drew these forces together. The Afghan leaders acted craftily, and, professing penitence, sought to be readmitted into the Viceroy's service, through Hybut, who was still Governor of

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Behar. Whether he was simply credulous, or secretly ambitious of engaging them in an attempt on his own account to supplant his uncle, has been doubted. But he solicited and gained a reluctant consent to re-enlist Shumsur and Sirdar Khan. The former—like Afzul Khan with Sivaji—affected timidity in the negotiation, and Hybut, like Afzul Khan, fell into the snare; appeared slightly attended, and was murdered by Shumsur's own hand; and Patna, where the deed was done, became the prey of the licentious and brutal soldiery. Ahmed, Hybut's father, was tortured to death, in the vain hope of forcing him to reveal where he had secreted his wealth. Hybut's wife, Aliverdi's daughter, was carried off; and the rebels, raising new forces with the plunder of the city, prepared to invade Bengal (1748).

In these desperate circumstances, the fortitude, prudence, and energy of the Viceroy were equally conspicuous.

"He [made] an earnest and pathetic appeal to his chief officers, acknowledging his great obligations to them, and [promising ample] rewards to those who might enable him to retrieve his affairs." But he gave to any who were inclined to abandon a possibly hopeless cause permission to depart. The result was a unanimous and enthusiastic declaration of a resolve to support him. This was solemnly confirmed by an oath on the Koran; and all consented

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to forego, until a more convenient season, their claims to pay. Some, however, on second thoughts, were not so sympathetic. But he bore with them, and even restored to active service the two officers who had been removed in Cuttak, making one of them, Atta Oōlla, joint commander, along with his surviving nephew, of his capital in his absence. This he could not spare troops to guard effectually from the Mahrattas; and he therefore recommended the inhabitants to retire behind the Ganges. With a large army he marched against the rebels, who had now made common cause with the Mahrattas, and offered to enter the service of the Bonsla. But Shumsur overreached himself. He treacherously arrested Meer Hubeeb, who had come to arrange terms—by way of hostage for the payment of the subsidy. Hence, in the battle that followed, the Mahrattas stood aloof; and Aliverdi gained a complete victory, killed Sirdar Khan, and recovered his daughter. The Afghan confederacy was entirely broken up, and the Mahrattas once more retreated, except from Cuttak.

After a new disturbance, caused by the rebellion of Aliverdi's degenerate grandson, Suraja Dowlah, the future captor of Calcutta, which was soon subdued, though the rebel was treated with undeserved lenity by his doting grandsire; and after again and again pursuing and repelling for the time his Parthian foes;

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Aliverdi, as age advanced upon him, seems to have grown weary of the interminable strife; and he at last came to a compromise: Cuttak, which he had never recovered, he ceded outright to the Bonsla; and he agreed to pay twelve lacs of rupees a year as a commutation of *chout* to the same Chief. On the other hand, the Mahratta incursions were to cease (1751).

During the short residue of his reign this agreement was faithfully observed.

Thus he did, at last, become a tributary of the Berar Raja, as Nizam-ul-Mulk had become of the Peishwa. But his stout and prolonged resistance, and the frequent defeats he had inflicted on the invaders, had contrasted greatly with the Nizam's repeated collapses, and at last almost utter overthrow.

I may add that Aliverdi discerned the incapacity of his grandson, and the danger of English encroachment. But his senile partiality for Suraja Dowlah prevented his debarring him from the succession; and prudence and a sense of justice seem to have combined against his adopting the suggestion that he should expel the formidable Europeans, before it should be too late.

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XXI

EPILOGUE

HERE I might conclude these lectures, for I have traced summarily their proper subject: the decline and dissolution of the Mogul Empire. I have endeavoured to show how Aurungzib's character, conduct, and policy fatally impaired his military strength, his moral authority, and his administrative system. I have shown how the Mahrattas arrested his course of conquest, vindicated their independence, and established an anti-polity, and an *imperium in imperio* in the Mogul Dekkan Provinces; how Aurungzib's son and immediate successor was fain to sanction this fiscal *imperium in imperio*; how they established themselves and subverted the Imperial authority in Guzerat; and, after forcibly occupying Malwa, extorted from the degenerate Emperor the right to govern it; and later a right to levy tribute in all the remaining provinces of the Empire, which involved ubiquitous extortion, spoliation, and disorder; how Nizam-ul-Mulk in the Dekkan, and Aliverdi Khan in the Bengal Provinces, while on the one hand practically emancipating themselves from the Imperial authority, on the other were constrained to

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become tributaries of the Mahrattas; how they effected a lodgment in Bundelcand; and, after Nadir Shah had given the *coup de grâce* to the majesty of the Empire, and wrested from it its North-West Provinces, they threatened universal predominance in Native India, with the destructive consequences inevitably entailed by the ascendancy of a community essentially predatory.

Such is the melancholy anticipation deducible from the course of events which I have described.

But though European interposition is beyond my present province, I do not think it would be right to conclude without recounting how this anticipation was rapidly falsified by the advent of another great conqueror from the same country whence Baber had marched to the conquest of Upper India, and the establishment of the Mogul Empire. In the course of one memorable campaign, and by the issue of one terrible battle, the Mahratta power was, for the time, shattered to atoms; and though the hydra-headed monster was not killed, it was so effectually scotched, that it remained practically almost quiescent, until great British statesmen were in a condition to cope with, and ultimately to master and disintegrate it.

Hence I think that it is not only allowable, but desirable, to supplement my proper subject with a narrative of this remarkable and important conflict, by way of epilogue to the great political and military tragedy which has occupied us so long.

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XXII

THE PANIPUT CAMPAIGN

If the decline and dissolution of the Mogul Empire was a remarkable and tragic phenomenon, still more tragically startling was the sudden collapse of the Mahratta power, when it had attained a position which threatened to make it the predominant tyrant of Native India, and the subverter of every native government, if not of the framework of civil society in their dominions.

A short retrospect will explain how this catastrophe came about.

Nadir Shah was assassinated in 1747. In his army was a young Afghan officer of noble lineage, the son of a man distinguished as a diplomatist, and popular among his countrymen. Young as he was, Ahmed, called the Abdali, from the name of his *ooloos*, or tribe, had studied war to good effect in the school, and under the eye, of Nadir Shah. And when their master fell he led his Afghan comrades back to their native hills. There his high birth, his father's reputation, and his own already established character, with the interposition of an influ-

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ential and saintly man, procured his election to the throne; and this was promptly justified by a display of political ability very remarkable in so youthful a sovereign, and which soon made him undisputed master of the allegiance, if not of the affections, of his wild subjects. His military organisation was equally able; and he followed the example of his instructor in the art of war, and invaded India (1748). But on this occasion he was repulsed by his namesake, Prince Ahmed, Mohammad Shah's son, who on his return to Delhi found the old Emperor dead, and succeeded him as Ahmed Shah. His own reign, however, was short and disastrous. On the murder of Nizam-ul-Mulk's eldest surviving son, Ghazi-u-din, in the Dekkan, *his* son and namesake at Delhi entered on a wild career of ambition. As his father, anxious to supplant Salabat Jung, had allied himself with the Peishwa; so now the younger Ghazi-u-din formed a connexion with Jeiapa Sindia and Mulhar Rao Holkar, and with their help made himself master of Delhi; assumed the office of Vizier, which Safder Jung had hitherto held; deposed and blinded Ahmed Shah, and set up another phantom sovereign—as Alumgeer the Second (1754). Safder Jung died soon after, and was succeeded in Oude by Shuja-u-Dowla, who plays a prominent part in Anglo-Indian as well as in native history.

Meanwhile Ahmed Shah Abdali had repeated

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his incursion into India; and, having conquered the Punjab, had placed it under the government of Meer Munnoo, a former Mogul Viceroy (1752). After the death of Munnoo and his infant son, Ghazi-u-din had overrun the province, carried off Munnoo's widow to Delhi, and appointed a Governor of his own, Adina Beg. Ahmed Shah, resenting this aggression, advanced once more —now to Delhi itself, "which," says Grant Duff, "was plundered, and its unhappy people again subjected to pillage, and its daughters to pollution."

Ghazi-u-din bowed to the storm, and was pardoned. But, after the victor retired, he resumed his mischievous activity. Again he called in the Mahrattas, now commanded by Rugonath Rao. He recovered Delhi, and the custody of his puppet, Alumgeer II.; deprived Nujeeb-u-Dowla, a leading chief of the Rohilla Afghans, of a high Imperial office which Ahmed Shah Abdali had procured him, and would have put him to death, had not Holkar interposed to save him. Moreover, Ghazi-u-din instigated Adina Beg, his former Governor of the Punjab, to revolt against Ahmed's son, Timour, who had been left in charge of that province, and the Sikhs joined in the rising.

Rugonath Rao was invited to co-operate; he invaded the Punjab, routed Ahmed Shah's general, and entered Lahore in triumph (1758). Soon after, another Sindia, Duttaji, was incited

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by Ghazi-u-din to invade Rohilkund, which he did; and again the Rohillas—countrymen of Ahmed Shah—fled to the Kumayoon mountains. Duttaji also quarrelled with Shuja-u-Dowla, whose predecessor had employed the Mahrattas to conquer his troublesome Rohilla neighbours, Ahmed Shah was not only a king and a conqueror, but, as an Afghan, he sympathised with the Rohillas; and, as a devout Mussulman, he resented Mahratta aggression on his co-religionists in Hindostan. The cup of his fury was full; and he resolved to bring to a decisive issue his quarrel with the Hindoo power which had thus crossed his track of conquest, ill-treated his allies, and made war on true believers.

Rugonath had returned to the Dekkan; and Ghazi-u-din had fled to the Jat Raja, Suraj Mull, when Ahmed Shah advanced once more into India; drove the Mahrattas under Holkar and Duttaji Sindia before him; engaged and killed Duttaji, and, hotly pursuing Holkar, defeated him with heavy loss. This was before the Bhow appeared on the scene.

I shall henceforth follow chiefly an excellent narrative by Casi Raja Pundit, who was not only an eye-witness of the battle of Paniput, but was much engaged in the negotiations which preceded it. And he was well circumstanced for forming an impartial estimate of events and characters. For he was, on the one hand, a Dekkanee Mahratta; and, on the

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other, an *employé* of Shuja-u-Dowla, having been for some time in the service of the Oude Government. Shuja-u-Dowla's own sympathies were divided, though in the end he joined Ahmed Shah. And though Casi Raja has been suspected of writing under Holkar's influence, this does not seem to have impaired the veracity of his account, which is very clear, comprehensive, and rational, except probably in one case, most material in explanation of the sudden collapse of the desperate Mahratta resistance.

He gives a very favourable estimate of the Bhow's ability in civil administration, and of his influence in the Peishwa's Cabinet; and he expressly states that Rugonath Rao's expedition was designed and equipped for completing the conquest of Hindostan; but that, in spite of the easy success of the military operations, the Bhow, on inspecting the accounts, ascertained that "a debt of eighty-eight lacs of rupees was due to the army; so much had the expenses been allowed to exceed all the collections of tribute, *peshcush*, etc." This, though not difficult to explain (for as Rugonath, though a *beau sabreur*, was an easy-going man, studious of popularity, he had probably allowed his subordinates to help themselves freely to the fruit of their exertions), was certainly, from a Mahratta point of view, a conclusive proof of military incapacity. But other qualities than those of a good Chancellor of the Exchequer

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were required to retrieve Rugonath's financial carelessness, and to meet the crisis which he had provoked. And the Bhow was, as a strategist and tactician, not less incompetent than Rugonath as a reaper of the spoils of war.

But, elated by his recent success in the Dekkan, he assumed the command of the army of Hindostan "with a light heart"; and set out, accompanied by Wiswas Rao, the Peishwa's eldest son, who, though a youth of seventeen, was nominally the leader of the expedition.

In his new sphere the Bhow soon displayed his defects, which boded serious mischief in the campaign. "He began," says Casi Raja, "to exercise his authority in a new and offensive manner, and . . . in all public business he showed a capricious and self-conceited conduct. He totally excluded from his council Mulhar Rao and all the other chiefs, who were experienced in the affairs of *Hindostan*, and who had credit and influence with the principal people in the country; and carried on everything by his own opinion alone." He made overtures in various quarters, and especially to Shuja-u-Dowla. But the young ruler of Oude preferred at present to remain a neutral spectator of the inevitable contest, and to choose his side later according to the fortune of war. The Bhow also applied to Suraj Mull, the Jat Raja, who insisted on negotiating through his usual medium—Holkar and Sindia. After this preliminary rebuke to

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Sedasheo's self-sufficiency, Suraj Mull proceeded to tender advice on the conduct of the war, which was very judicious, but which the Bhow received very flippantly, relishing it the less because Holkar and the other chiefs, who well knew the proposed theatre of war and the character of the enemies they would have to meet, cordially approved of it. The Jat Raja urged that the Mahratta operations would be much hampered by the multitude of women and children—the families of the officers and soldiers who accompanied the army; by the profusion of baggage with which the growing luxury of the Peishwa's Court had stored the camp; and by the long train of heavy artillery which the Bhow specially affected. Let all these, he urged, be deposited in Jansi or Gwalior, or in his own forts of Bhurtpore, Deeg, or Combeir. "Your troops," he observed, "are more light and expeditious than those of Hindostan, *but the Douranies are still more expeditious than you.*"

This statement was surprising if not incredible to the Bhow, But it was based on experience. And the following words show that Suraj Mull's insight into the military situation was by no means contemptible, and, if turned to account, might have averted the ensuing catastrophe:—

"In this arrangement you will have the advantage of a free communication with a friendly country behind you, and need be under

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no apprehensions respecting supplies to your army." In support of this advice, Mulhar Rao added that "trains of artillery were suitable to the royal armies, but that the Mahratta mode of war was predatory, and their best way was to follow the method to which they had been accustomed."

They might thus drag out the campaign without a general action till the rains set in, and the enemy would then be driven to retreat. But the Bhow's vanity was touched; he was jealous of Rugonath, and feared being invidiously contrasted with his cousin, who had reached Lahore in conquering guise. "It never should be reproached to him, that he, who was the superior, had gained nothing but the disgrace of acting defensively." The wisest were shocked at this arrogance; and a general murmur prevailed that "it is better that *this Brahmin* should once meet with a defeat, or else what weight and consideration shall we be allowed?"

This was not a sentiment likely to second the ambitious hopes of the self-opinionated general.

He now marched to Delhi, and besieged the fort, which was still held for the Afghan King by a nephew of his Vizier, who was soon obliged to capitulate. Again the victor wantonly outraged the feelings of the Hindostanees, Hindoos as well as Mussulmans, who from old associations revered the Empire, even in its dotage. He plundered such monuments of Mogul splendour

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as had been left by Nadir Shah and later devastators. Thus he stripped the magnificent Hall of Audience of its fine silver ceiling, which he coined into seventeen lacs of rupees. And our author mentions, on the authority of his master, Shuja-u-Dowla, a project far more outrageous in the eyes of Moguls, Rajputs, and, indeed, of all Imperialists: the Bhow is said to have meditated, when the campaign should be over, placing Wiswas Rao, the Peishwa's son, on the throne of Delhi!

In striking contrast to this reckless course were the wary precautions of the Abdali to strengthen his interest in Hindostan. Nujeeb-u-Dowla, the most powerful of the Rohilla chiefs, was bound to him by the strongest ties, not least by a bitter personal animosity between himself and the Bhow and Sindia. The other Rohilla leaders were also thoroughly engaged on the same side. But Shuja-u-Dowla was undecided, and the Shah saw the great importance of securing him; and he effected this adroitly. Through Nujeeb-u-Dowla Shuja was made to feel his own insecurity as a neutral, and his danger in case victory should attend the Bhow, whose hatred of all Mussulmans was notorious. He was convinced, and marched into the Afghan camp, where he was received with much distinction, both by the Shah and by his Vizier, who solemnly hailed him as their son.

The Shah, who had advanced to Anopsher for the purpose of effecting his junction with

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the Rohillas, soon after took up a position on the bank of the Jumna, opposite to Delhi; but the swollen state of the river arrested active operations for the present. Native belligerents, Mahrattas especially, have always had an odd habit of continuing negotiations in the midst of war, and of mutually sending and entertaining *vakeels*, or agents, for this purpose. Wellesley highly resented this practice; and his brother Arthur, in the Mahratta war, put a summary stop to it. But it flourished luxuriantly in the Paniput campaign; and our author, who was busily engaged in it, devotes much space to describing it. An unwary reader, who did not understand the character and manners of Asiatics, might thus be led much astray, and imagine that peace was constantly on the point of being concluded on moderate terms. But in reality this was not at all the case. The Bhow was finessing in the hope of extricating himself from a position which was becoming more and more embarrassing.

The Abdali, calmly confident, did not care to interrupt the hollow game, in which his Indian allies took pleasure, and probably felt much like the cat sporting with the mouse—before springing upon it. Hence I shall not detain you by dwelling on these unreal overtures. But I must mention that the Bhow did make not only repeated but earnest efforts first to detach Shuja-u-Dowla from the Shah's adhe-

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sion, and lure him into his own camp; next, to induce him at least to stand neutral; and, lastly, as his prospects darkened, and the fortune of war seemed disposed to declare against himself, to persuade Shuja to exert his influence towards securing him an opportunity of effecting the inglorious retreat, the mere semblance of which, when recommended to him by Suraj Mull as a measure of strategic precaution, had, before the opening of the campaign, so deeply wounded his vanity. But all these attempts failed. Shuja confided all these overtures to the Shah, who took care neither to interrupt the futile negotiations, nor to commit himself to any inexpedient concession. He was thoroughly resolved to inflict a severe chastisement on the Mahrattas. And he heartily sympathised with the view of his chief adviser, Nujeeb-u-Dowla, who urged: "At present we may be said to have the whole Dekkan at our mercy; when can we hope for another juncture so favourable? By one effort we get this thorn out of our sides for ever." Nor did the wily Rohilla argue only in the interests of the Hindostanees. He appealed to the ambition of the Abdali King; and, repeating his expressive metaphor, he added: "The Mahrattas are the thorn of Hindostan; if they were out of the way, the Empire might be your Majesty's whenever you should please."

Shuja-u-Dowla, turning the Bhow's diplo-

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matic arts against him, through his *vakeels* strongly advised the Jat Raja to abandon the Mahratta cause. It is stated that Mulhar Rao and the other disaffected chiefs joined in this advice, which was addressed to willing ears. This admission that Casi Pundit's patron thus deliberately weakened the Bhow's force, seems to tell favourably as to his credibility; while the fact indicates forcibly the unpopularity, not to say the hatred, of the Brahmin generalissimo, *one* chief cause of the result of his ill-fated enterprise.

Distrusted, slighted, and snubbed by the Bhow, Suraj Mull had little inducement to remain. And he went off by forced marches; and thus, through the folly of its commander, the Mahratta army was deprived of a most important, nay, an indispensable ally.

During the monsoon the Shah, though immediately opposite Delhi, at Shahdere, on the bank of the Jumna, made no attempt to cross the river. The Bhow, when the rains abated, but before the Jumna was passable, marched with a picked force against Kunjpoora, which was held by the Rohillas, and captured it. It lay nearly 100 miles north; and his object was to command the passage of the river, and to be able to cross, and become the assailant. But he returned to Delhi without making any use of the opportunity. On the other hand, the Abdali, in this as in other respects, showed his superior generalship. He suddenly broke

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up his camp, and by a night march reached Baugput, 36 miles above Delhi. There, while the Bhow was out of the way, and his main army at Delhi, he resolved to effect the passage. And this he successfully accomplished without interruption. But the operation was more difficult and protracted than he had anticipated. "He searched in vain," says Casi Pundit, "for the ford, the river being still very high, and several horsemen, attempting to pass, were drowned. The Shah, having fasted, and performed religious ceremonies for two days, on the third a ford was discovered; but it was very narrow, and on each side the water was so deep as to drown whoever went the least out of the proper track. . . . The Shah passed as soon as half of his army was on the other side. The whole army was completely crossed in two days; but from their numbers, and the great expedition used, many people lost their lives." Such is Casi Raja's account of a proceeding which may seem rash on Ahmed Shah's part. But what are we to think of his antagonist, who neglected to interrupt the crossing, and thereby forfeited the enormous advantage which he would have had in assailing his enemy in such a situation? The editor of the narrative answers the question. He says: "This seems to have been the crisis of the Bhow's fortune; had he boldly attacked the Shah while he was passing the Jumna, he would probably have totally defeated him."

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On the very next day (26th October) the two armies neared each other, and a partial action took place between the advanced guards, in which the Mahrattas were worsted, and lost twice as many men as the Afghans. Similar skirmishes followed, the Bhow constantly retiring, till he reached the already memorable field of Paniput, about 60 miles north of Delhi. There he took up an elaborate position, enclosing his camp and the town "with a trench 60 feet wide and 12 deep, with a good rampart, on which he mounted his cannon." This proceeding was ominously like that previously adopted more than once by Nizam-ul-Mulk in his wars with the Mahrattas themselves, and in each case with such disastrous results. And the Bhow's people were very certain to take note of, and to be much disheartened by, such a coincidence.

The Shah encamped to the eastward, and surrounded his position with felled trees, as Baber had done, on his last invasion of India. His front is said to have extended seven miles, so large was his force, of which more presently.

Though the Bhow had rejected Suraj Mull's wise suggestion, which would have assured his commissariat, he had attempted to starve out the invaders. He had appointed Govind Pundit, the Peishwa's Collector for the Doab and Bundelcand, to muster all the force he possibly could, and to cut off the Shah's communication for provision in his rear. Govind with two thousand

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men had reached Meerut, and obeyed his orders so effectually "that the Shah's army was in the greatest distress for provisions." But the Abdali was not a man to endure this tamely. He detached a body of chosen men, under his Vizier's nephew, who was largely reinforced by Douranee irregulars, acting on their own account. According to orders, they made a rapid march of 80 miles in a single night, and "at daybreak," says Casi Pundit, "they fell like lightning upon the camp of Govind Pundit"; routed and cut up his force; and taking him prisoner, promptly presented his head to the Shah, whose foraging parties were not again molested; and who, in fact, rapidly turned the tables in this respect upon the Mahrattas. Another serious mishap soon after increased the difficulties of the rash commander. He dispatched two thousand horsemen to convoy a large amount of treasure from Delhi, for the use of the army. Travelling by by-roads, they gained the capital undisturbed; but on their return they missed their way, and rode into the enemy's quarters. They were cut to pieces, and the money was, of course, lost.

Remembering what the Mahrattas had hitherto been; how their terrible agility had baffled Aurungzib, at the height of his power; how they had circumvented Nizam-ul-Mulk, and reduced him to extremity; how they had outmarched Aliverdi Khan; it does seem strange

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that they should have allowed themselves to be cooped up in their camp by the Afghans; denuded of supplies, and gradually brought to a state of positive starvation. Yet such was the case.

The Bhow's want of enterprise and skill will partially explain this. To send out small parties would have been to ensure their destruction. And he seems to have been reluctant to move out in force, for fear of endangering his cumbrous train of artillery. The effects of his jealous, capricious, and overbearing temper, and the consequent disaffection and at least passive insubordination of several of his chiefs and their followers, must also be taken into account. But this was not all. There was a paralysing spell upon the army. The Mahrattas, from an early period of the campaign, seem to have felt themselves to be doomed to destruction. And, on the other side, Suraj Mull had not exaggerated the superior agility of the Afghans, even when compared with the veteran predatory hosts of the Dekkan. And the Afghan Sovereign's watchfulness was unsleeping; his beleaguering arrangements were most systematic; his discipline was most strict; and his orders, says Casi Pundit, "were obeyed like destiny." Daily, at sunrise, he says, Ahmed Shah "visited every post of the army. . . . He also reconnoitred the camp of the enemy, and . . . saw everything with his own eyes, riding usually 40 or 50 coss every

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day. . . . At night there was a body of 5000 horse, advanced as near as conveniently might be, towards the enemy's camp, where they remained all night under arms; other bodies went the rounds of the whole encampment [*i.e.* of the Mahrattas]."

Under such circumstances, unless they were prepared for a general action, it was not easy for the Bhow's troops to forage, nor indeed to emerge safely from their quarters.

Yet there were several partial engagements, and daily cannonading and skirmishing. On one occasion twenty thousand camp-followers made their way out to cut wood for fuel; but the night guard of five thousand men intercepted them, and put them all to the sword. The depressing effect of this wholesale butchery on the Mahrattas was great; and the Bhow, who had hitherto affected cheerfulness, now betrayed "fear and despondency." No convoys could reach his camp, and provisions and forage were almost exhausted.

The Shah's Indian advisers, meanwhile, seeing the enemy so completely in the toils, were impatient, and eager to fall on them. Casi Raja says: "The Hindostany chiefs were out of all patience, and entreated the Shah to put an end to their fatigues, by coming at once to a decisive action; but his constant answer was, 'This is a matter of war, with which you are not acquainted. In other affairs do as you please [a sly cut at their

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fussy and futile negotiations], but leave this to me. Military operations must not be precipitated. You will see how I will manage this affair, and at a proper opportunity will bring it to a successful conclusion.'"

However unlike the Bhow was to Massena, the calm confidence in himself and his plan exhibited by Ahmed Shah, and his accurate foresight of its working, were much akin to Wellington's attitude at the lines of Torres Vedras. With his own communications open, and those of his adversary closed, the Shah knew well that every day that the decisive contest was delayed must tell to his advantage. And the course of diplomacy proved this. For our author tells us that, at this crisis, "the Bhow often wrote letters to me with his own hand, desiring that I would urge the Nawab [*i.e.* of Oude] to mediate a peace for him—that he was ready to submit to any conditions, if he could but preserve himself and his army, and would by every means manifest his gratitude to the mediators." Shuja-u-Dowla and most of the Indian chiefs professed willingness to come to terms; but Nujeeb-u-Dowla was inexorable, and the Shah was, of course, like-minded. After in vain plundering the grain in the town of Paniput, hunger compelled the Mahratta chiefs and soldiers to insist upon an immediate general action. The Bhow consented; and it was resolved "to march out of the lines an hour

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before daybreak, and, placing the artillery in front, to proceed to the attack of the enemy. They all swore to fight to the last extremity."

Just before the battle began, Casi Raja received a pathetic note from the disillusioned and desperate generalissimo. "The cup," he said, "is now full to the brim, and cannot hold another drop. If anything can be done, do it, or else answer me plainly at once; hereafter there will be no time for writing or speaking." While this note was under consideration by Shuja-u-Dowla, he learned that the Mahratta army was already in motion. He at once aroused the Shah, who "mounted one of the horses which were always ready saddled at the tent door," and rode forth to reconnoitre, "ordering the troops under arms as he went along." He was sitting on his horse, calmly smoking a Persian pipe, when the Mahratta guns, in advance of their line, opened a general fire. He immediately arrayed his army in battle order; rode along the whole front, inspecting it carefully; and then, posting himself at his tent, between his camp and the army, gave the word for opening the engagement.

Though seriously weakened by the retirement of the Jats and the absence of the Bonsla's forces, the Mahratta army was very numerous and formidable. The Bhow's chief reliance was upon the regular and experienced corps of Ibrahim Khan, comprising "2000 horse, and

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9000 sepoys, with firelocks, disciplined after the European manner, together with 40 pieces of cannon." These were field-pieces. Except some five or six thousand inferior infantry, equipped in native fashion, the rest of the army consisted of cavalry, 53,000 in number, under various leaders, who each supplied his own contingent. Thus Holkar contributed 5000; Sindia, 10,000; Amaji Guikwar, 3000; Jeswunt Rao Powar, 2000; etc.

The whole train of artillery included 200 cannon, though the bulk of these were heavy "guns of position," which, in spite of all the sacrifices made on their behalf, were soon left behind by the horsemen in their furious charge, and, after the initial fusillade, played, in fact, no part in the battle.

This was also much the case on the other side. But both parties used *shuternals*, or camel-swivels, and rockets, in great profusion. The Bhow had also in his service two Pindari leaders, with 15,000 of their irregular and vagabond cavalry. The number of the Afghan cavalry was not so great, being a little short of 42,000. But, including the Rohillas and Shuja-u-Dowla's troops, they had 38,000 foot, with between 70 and 80 cannon. There were also, besides the *shuternals*, "2000 camels, on each of which were mounted two musketeers, armed with pieces of a very large bore."

Casi Raja took great pains to verify these

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details. But, moreover, as to the Afghan army he adds: "The number of irregulars which accompanied these troops were four times that number; and the horses and arms were very little inferior to those of the regular Douranies. All the Douranies were men of great bodily strength, and their horses of the Turkish breed; naturally very hardy, and rendered still more so by continual exercise."

Thus, on the whole, whether we consider the relative capacity of the commanders, the numbers on each side, or the superior physique of the Douranies, especially in the famished state of the Mahrattas, the advantage seems much in favour of the northerners, unless Ibrahim Khan's disciplined battalions could justify the expectation of the Bhow, and emulate Bussy's and Clive's triumphs with the same instrument, though wielded by so inferior a pupil.

The same inference must be drawn from two points of contrast in the conduct of the commanders on either side.

The Bhow brought all his forces at once into action, and, personally leading a tremendous and effective charge of cavalry, combated hotly throughout the day in the centre of his line. The Afghan King, on the contrary, taking his station at the tent in front of his camp, which had been his constant post of observation during the blockade of the Mahratta lines, but was now in the rear of his army, calmly directed

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its operations; and observed, and influenced by new dispositions, the varying fortunes of the day, without distracting himself from the discharge of his duties as a general by personal participation in the encounter. And again, besides a large body of special armed attendants, for miscellaneous duties, he retained a strong reserve which (as we shall see) he launched at the critical moment, thereby restoring the battle, and securing his ultimate victory.

The Mahratta army was arrayed as follows: Ibrahim Khan Gardee, with nine battalions of sepoys, and his field-pieces, was on its extreme left, and next to him the Guikwar. The Bhow, with Wiswas Rao, was in the centre of the line, with other Mahratta chiefs and their contingents. Sindia and Holkar were on the right. The Shah's right was composed of a mixed body of Persian and other Moguls and of Rohilla Afghans. The Shah's Grand Vizier commanded the centre, opposite to the Bhow. Next him, on his left, was Shuja-u-Dowla; and on *his* left, Nujeeb-u-Dowla, the Rohilla chief of most note, and the inveterate enemy of Janoji Sindia, who was immediately opposed to him; and on Nujeeb's left was Shah Pussand Khan, described as a "brave and experienced officer." His division formed the extreme left of the Shah's army. The Abdali's artillery and the Bhow's large park of heavy cannon were ranged in front of their respective lines. But, under

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the circumstances, neither of these armaments rendered much service, nor contributed at all to decide the fate of the day. The Bhow had calculated greatly on the effect of his numerous and powerful guns, and he began operations by a general and heavy cannonade. But whether, as is most probable, from the imperfect training and the excitement of the gunners, or, as Casi Pundit suggests, from a deficiency of construction, which prevented the guns from being sufficiently depressed to take the proper range, the shot flew high over the heads of the enemy, and fell (it is said) a mile beyond the Douranee army, and did little execution. Ibrahim Khan himself, realising this, presently silenced all the guns, and resolved to come to close quarters with the bayonet. Thus one of the Bhow's best trump cards was thrown away at once. But Ibrahim hastened to assure him that he had no intention of proving false to his salt, and to verify his assertion by bringing into play the redoubtable force of his disciplined sepoys. The Mahratta army had advanced obliquely, so that Ibrahim's corps was nearing its opponents, while, on the other wing, the distance between the armies was considerable. Ibrahim, therefore, reserving two battalions to keep the Moguls on the extreme right of the Shah's army in check, with his seven others fiercely assailed the Rohillas. They received the charge with great resolution; and

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a desperate hand-to-hand contest ensued. But, in the end, the Rohillas were broken, and lost nearly eight thousand killed or wounded. But, on the other hand, Casi Pundit says, in the action, which lasted three hours, "six of Ibrahim Khan's battalions were almost entirely ruined, and he himself [was] wounded in several places." And he adds, that "the same happened to the Guikwar, who behaved very well in his support."

Meanwhile, the Bhow in the centre, with the household troops, the flower of his army, fell like an avalanche upon the Grand Vizier's division.

The impetuous onslaught of the Mahratta cavalry had always been most formidable. And both the Bhow and his troops, however conscious of their old renown, were not less conscious that they had, at last, met at least their match, and that nothing but victory on this day could save them, not only from disgrace, but from certain and prompt destruction. Hence, attenuated as they were from previous privations, they charged in their desperation with the utmost impetuosity and terrible effect. "The Mahrattas," says Casi Pundit, "broke through a line of 10,000 horse, 7000 Persian musketeers, and 1000 camels, with zamburaks [long guns] upon them, killing and wounding about 3000 of them." The whole centre was thrown into confusion, and a disorderly retreat began. The

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Grand Vizier, with a small force, still stood firm, and made a desperate effort to rally his scattered soldiers.

Casi Raja had been sent by Shuja-u-Dowla, who was yet unassailed, but could discern little through the dense cloud of dust, to ascertain the state of the case. And he found the Grand Vizier "in an agony of rage and despair, reproaching his men for quitting him, and exclaiming, 'Our country is far off—whither do you fly?' But," adds the witness of this critical scene, "no one regarded his orders or exhortations." Then, suddenly recognising the narrator, he cried out: "Ride to my son, Shuja-u-Dowla, and tell him that if he does not support me immediately, I must perish." But Shuja, on receiving this pressing message, did not venture to move with his small force of two thousand horse and one thousand musketeers, lest he should open the way to the enemy through the breach in the line which his diversion would cause. And he did stem the tide immediately opposed to him.

But thus, on the whole, both in the centre and on the right, the Shah's army was in desperate case, and defeat seemed inevitable. His left wing, on the other hand, was not only unbroken, but was holding in check, and steadily gaining ground on its opponents. There Nujeeb-u-Dowla at the head of eight thousand Rohilla infantry and six thousand horse, conscious of his vital interest in the issue, animated by mortal hatred

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of Sindia, and cool and crafty as he was brave and implacable, kept the Mahrattas at bay, and baffled their characteristic attack by two devices. Being well supplied with rockets, he plied the enemy with incessant volleys—"of two thousand at a time," which not only terrified the horses by their noise, but did so much execution that the enemy could not effect a charge in compact order. And, under cover of this distracting fire, he threw up successively breast-works of sand, and advanced from one of these to another, until he had gained a *coss*, "and was within a long musket shot of the enemy." And in this operation he was well supported by Shah Pussand and his Moguls on his flank.

In this undecided state the conflict continued from dawn to noon; when, says Casi Pundit, "though we suffered least in point of killed and wounded, the Mahrattas seemed to have the advantage."

A comprehensive survey of the state of affairs at this period of the battle might well have inclined an unprofessional spectator to take a more decidedly unfavourable view of the Shah's prospect of success, in spite of his superior numbers, the stronger physique of his soldiers, and the inefficiency of the Mahratta artillery, on which the Bhow had so confidently relied.

Ahmed Shah's right, after a desperate and prolonged hand-to-hand conflict, had not only been thrown into utter confusion, but had

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sustained a terrible slaughter; while, though six of Ibrahim Khan's battalions had been similarly cut up, three were still compact and efficient. The overwhelmingly impetuous charge of the Bhow's cavalry in the centre had pierced their opponents' ranks, routed them, and put them to flight, though the Grand Vizier had made despairing efforts to keep them up to the mark, and with a small body of stalwarts still maintained his ground. And though the Afghan left had not only baffled the Mahratta cavalry charge, but had advanced beyond the main army, its actual position exposed it all the more to the danger of a flank attack, which Shuja-u-Dowla's small contingent would little avail to resist, when the flight of the centre left the Bhow free to divert his victorious cavalry against the only corps that was still unbroken.

But the Abdali's eagle eye was scanning each phase of the conflict, and his forecasting mind had provided against such an emergency. He saw that an immediate and a supreme effort must be made to restore the battle, and for this he had prudently held in hand his strong reserve force. This he now promptly brought into action. And he now commanded five hundred of his special body of cavalry, retained for emergent services, to "drive out by force all armed people whom they should find in his camp, that they might assist in the action." And he appointed one thousand five hundred

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more of the same special service troops "to meet the fugitives from the battle, and to kill every man who should refuse to return to the charge." Thus, besides some who were found in the camp, seven or eight thousand of the fugitives were reclaimed, who with the reserve constituted a formidable force.

Four thousand were sent to cover the right flank; and the Grand Vizier was reinforced with ten thousand, and ordered "to charge the enemy, sword in hand, in close order, and at full gallop."

Shah Pussand Khan and Nujeeb-u-Dowla were to co-operate by a flank charge on the Mahratta right.

These combined movements were vigorously executed, and, says Casi Pundit, "produced a terrible effect."

The sequel I will give in my author's own words, which, concise and simple as they are, sufficiently attest the stubbornness and desperate determination of the attenuated and half-famished Mahrattas, until their sudden collapse and precipitate flight:—

"This close and violent attack lasted for near an hour, during which time they fought on both sides with spears, swords, battle-axes, and even daggers. Between two and three o'clock Wiswas Rao was wounded, and dismounted from his horse. . . . The Bhow himself continued the action near half an hour longer

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on horseback, at the head of his men; when, all at once, as if by enchantment, the whole Mahratta army at once turned their backs and fled at full speed, leaving the field of battle covered with heaps of dead. The instant they gave way the victors pursued them with the utmost fury; and, as they gave no quarter, the slaughter is scarcely to be conceived, the pursuit continuing for ten or twelve coss in every direction in which they fled."

The anonymous translator of the narrative suggests that it was the fall of Wiswas Rao that caused the abrupt flight of the Mahrattas. But this is inconsistent with the statement that the Bhow fought on for half an hour longer. A more probable reason is, that Holkar, who had throughout disapproved of the Bhow's tactics, and bore no love to him, and who did actually make his escape from this fatal field, either lost heart or treacherously deserted his uncongenial and despised leader, and set an example which was quickly followed by the exhausted and desponding Mahrattas, who may have been the more panic-stricken from having, in the interval, learned of the death of the Peishwa's son.

Besides those who fell in the battle and in the pursuit, numbers were put to death by the zemindars of the country, who were naturally glad to have an opportunity of avenging the long-standing and grievous wrongs which they

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and their people had suffered from the predatory confederacy. Moreover, besides the actual combatants, the Mahratta camp supplied the materials for another wholesale massacre. Casi Pundit estimates its inmates, men, women, and children, at half a million. And of these, forty thousand only survived; the rest were slaughtered in cold blood by the ferocious Afghans.

Shuja-u-Dowla gave refuge to six or seven thousand, and was obliged to employ his troops to protect them from the eager pursuit of the savage victors.

Ahmed Shah returned to his own country, and never revisited India. The awful tidings —including the death of his son, and the mysterious disappearance of the Bhow—were a mortal blow to the Peishwa; and, like Eli when the Ark of God was taken, he promptly expired. And the imminent prospect of Mahratta predominance in India was obliterated in a day, and for ever.

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